

The Nation and The Athenæum

THE NATION. VOL. XXXVIII., No. 24.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1926.

[THE ATHENÆUM. No. 5002.]

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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Report of the Coal Commission comes so late that we must reserve a considered survey of it until next week. Broadly, the recommendations of the Commissioners are those which we foreshadowed in our issue of January 16th as the inevitable corollary of the logic of the situation. They decide against a general extension of working hours, though they urge the need for greater flexibility in certain cases, particularly where coal-cutting machinery is employed, and suggest that provision might be made for the optional redistribution of hours, within the present weekly total, over a week of five days instead of six. As regards wages, they advise adherence to the method of national agreements, which, they point out, is not incompatible with considerable variations between different districts, and they condemn the proposals of the Mining Association as going "beyond the need." But a substantial reduction in wages seems to them "indispensable," and the long and short of their suggestions under this head is a reduction of wages of the order of magnitude of 10 per cent., though it might be less in some districts and more in others, to be effected by revising the "minimum percentage addition to standard rates of wages." This, they are careful to point out, is a different minimum from the "subsistence" minimum which the worst-paid men receive, and which, they indicate, ought not to be reduced at all. Even with a reduction of wages of the above order of magnitude, "it seems inevitable that a number of collieries would still have to be closed. This may give rise to the necessity for a transfer of labour on a considerable scale. We recommend that the Government should be prepared in advance with such plans to assist it as are practicable, and should provide funds for the purpose."

Such is the Commissioners' analysis of the "immediate problem," and the only surprising feature (or so we find it) of their proposals in this connection is the emphasis with which they repudiate the notion of any extension (however temporary) of the subsidy. Its continuance would be "indefensible." "The subsidy should stop at the end of its authorized term and should never be repeated." It may not prove easy to carry

out this austere injunction. It is only some six weeks now till the end of this "authorized term," and it will not be a simple matter within this period to effect a wages settlement on the lines indicated. Apart from the immediate problem, there is the problem of the reorganization of the industry, and the Commissioners urge that "acceptance by all parties" of their proposals under this head (though, of course, they can only be brought into operation slowly) must be a prior condition of asking the miners to submit to lower wages. Here, again, their proposals follow expected lines, though, wisely we dare say, they are less ambitious and less detailed than some had anticipated. They advise the State purchase of royalties, they indicate that the State in its position as mineral-owner "will be able to promote desirable amalgamations when granting new leases or renewing old ones." They urge in general terms the need for a closer connection between mining and allied industries. They argue that the system of distribution is unsatisfactory, that co-operative selling agencies are needed, particularly in the export trade, and they propose that local authorities should be empowered to engage in the retail sale of coal. They urge the general establishment of joint pit committees to improve relations between employers and employed, an increase in the Miners' Welfare Fund, and the general and obligatory adoption of profit-sharing. An interesting feature of their recommendations is that they strongly advocate the system of family allowances associated with the name of Miss Eleanor Rathbone.

It is to be hoped that reasonable persons in every interest and in every party will take their stand upon the principle of the integral adoption of the Report. The wage suggestions will necessarily be extremely unpalatable to the miners; but it was inevitable that they should be so; for it is the situation itself which is fundamentally disagreeable. The Commission is about as able and disinterested a body of men as could possibly have been constituted; they have surveyed the problem with extreme thoroughness, and in a temper at once sympathetic and judicial. And now that they have

pronounced, it should be the concern of everyone to enhance the authority of their pronouncements. The Government, on its side, ought to make no bones about carrying out the proposals which require its intervention. The idea of purchasing the royalties and using the State's position as mineral-owner to effect desirable amalgamations is no novelty. It is an idea which has been widely advocated and long digested, and which has stood the test of criticism. Definite shape was first given to it as long ago as 1922 in the paper read by Mr. A. D. McNair to the Liberal Summer School, embodying the views of the School Committee; and it was elaborated later on in "Coal and Power." But while Liberals may justly claim some special credit in respect of detailed construction, the general idea has long commended itself to thoughtful people in every party.

The world drama which is being staged along the corridors of Geneva hotels has yielded, so far, only one definite result. It has speeded up in a remarkable manner the latest essay in Cabinet making in France. The downfall of M. Briand's last Ministry, as the result of the Chamber's persistence in rejecting the tax on payments which the Senate had restored, would ordinarily have been followed by a long-drawn-out interval of lobbying. But it soon became apparent that a Cabinetless condition was prejudicing the French cause at Geneva; and M. Briand, having agreed on Tuesday afternoon to form another Ministry, completed within ten hours a task that might otherwise have occupied him for ten days. The achievement is perhaps less remarkable than this bald fact makes it seem; for M. Briand's new Ministry is virtually the same as his old one. There is yet another Minister of Finance—M. Raoul Peret—and that is almost all. Whether there will also be a new financial policy, or a financial policy at all, how the now almost inextricable confusion created by the divergent attitudes of the Chamber and the Senate will be straightened out, are questions on which no one has any clear idea—least of all, probably, M. Briand. This Ministry has been put together with an eye to Geneva rather than to the Budget.

Sir Austen Chamberlain appears to have been using his "free hand" at Geneva as almost everyone expected that he would, *i.e.*, he has been throwing the influence of Britain into the opposite scale to that desired by the British people. Instead of going all out to persuade the ever-growing list of claimants to permanent seats to postpone their claims until a more appropriate season and to agree to Germany's admission without more ado, it is upon the German representatives that he has directed his pressure, seeking to extract from them some sort of undertaking to support at least the Spanish claim at a later date. It is not surprising, we say, that he should have taken this line. Colonel Wedgwood showed a shrewd knowledge of Sir Austen's mental constitution when he said in the House last week: "I know the right hon. gentleman well enough to know that when he goes to Geneva, he will, whatever the result of this debate may be, continue to put forward at Geneva the views he has already put forward in private conversation and public speeches." But it is extraordinarily perverse. For the course which Sir Austen has chosen is, apart from the inherent objections to it, by far the most *difficult*, from the practical standpoint, of the alternatives before him. If he succeeds in persuading Germany to abandon the position of strict correctness which is manifestly her safest position, he has still to reckon with Sweden; and, as we suggest in a leading article, he has greatly underrated the strength

which conviction gives to the Swedish defences. On the other hand, the notion that Spain, Brazil, or any other claimant can afford to put herself wrong with world opinion by withdrawing from the League or vetoing Germany's admission out of sheer *pique* is not one which even now, we trust, need be taken seriously.

The crisis in the engineering industry is sufficiently complicated to merit a fairly detailed account of its development. On January 13th, Messrs. Hoe, of London, locked out their employees, to the number of nine hundred, because the men had begun an unofficial stay-in strike, *i.e.*, they stood by their machines but did no work. The strikers affirmed that union men had been dismissed on the ground of lack of work, but were immediately replaced by non-unionists. After the strike had begun, they joined a demand for a 20s. wage increase to their original grievance. On February 8th the London District presented a demand for a 20s. wage increase, but the employers refused to negotiate until Hoe's men were back at work, on the ground that this strike was a direct violation of the agreed procedure for settling disputes. On February 26th the National Employers' Federation and all the national Unions met to continue negotiations on the long-standing demand for the national 20s. wage increase: a deadlock ensued, and when the Unions hinted at further negotiations on a district basis, the employers threatened a national lock-out. On the same day, the employers also threatened to post national lock-out notices on March 5th to the members of the seven Unions concerned if Hoe's men had not by then returned to work. On March 2nd the seven Unions with members amongst the Hoe strikers discussed the position, and decided to summon a meeting of the executives of all the engineering Unions and their officials for March 5th. At that meeting a resolution was passed calling upon the strikers to return to work and allow the constitutional procedure to be operated. On the same day the national lock-out notices to the seven Unions were posted.

Two days later—that is, last Sunday—the London district committees, together with the London branch secretaries and shop-stewards, refused to pass on the recommendations of their national executives, and agreed to back the strikers in every possible way. Naturally, therefore, on Monday the strikers resolved not to return to work. On Wednesday the representatives of the national executives of the seven Unions invited the strikers to attend a meeting at the Memorial Hall, in order that the instructions to return to work might be delivered personally; thereupon the strike committee called a meeting at the Builders' Labourers' Hall half an hour earlier. After some discussion the latter meeting adjourned to the Memorial Hall, and a debate took place between the Union leaders and the strikers' leaders. Finally, a resolution to continue the strike was carried with only three dissentients. The Union executives thereupon decided to enforce discipline, and asked the employers for a short postponement of the lock-out notices. This was conceded, and the notices were postponed from Saturday till next Thursday.

There is no shadow of doubt that Hoe's men are entirely and absolutely in the wrong. Equally there can be little doubt that the employers have managed their part in a most provocative manner. The most serious factor is the attitude of the London district committees, and their decision last Sunday was greatly influenced by the feeling that if they gave in on the Hoe dispute, they had still to face a national lock-out unless they gave up any attempt to obtain a district advance in wages.

Accordingly, they adopted the line of "in for a penny in for a pound." The employers ought never to have issued their double threat simultaneously, even if they were really justified in issuing either. The threat to lock-out on the Hoe strike may have been bluff—may have even been secretly welcomed by the Union executives as strengthening their hands—but the threat to lock-out if any district pressed a wage claim, was not bluff, and the men realize it, and so do their leaders. But the leaders also realize that so long as the Hoe strike remains an issue, public opinion will be against them, just as much as it will be against the employers, if their handling of the whole affair forces them to make their bluff a reality, and brings about a national calamity with no justifiable cause.

* * *

We note, with considerable satisfaction, that the debate on the Air Force estimates provoked discussion on the points to which we have repeatedly drawn attention. Mr. Attlee asked outright whether the real purpose of the Air Forces not attached to the Army and Navy was to terrorize the civilian population of a prospective enemy, and said that, if these important questions were to be usefully discussed, the defence plans of the Government must be communicated in greater detail. We have repeatedly pointed out the obstacle to effective discussion of service questions presented by the absolute secrecy with which the policy that underlies the measures is shrouded. We are glad also that Commander Carlyon Bellairs raised the question of departmental indiscretions to the Press. When challenged to make good his statement, he answered that he could produce a confidential document which justified him. In reply to criticism, the Air Minister made the very important admission that the Air Force "might not" be able to prevent hostile air forces from raiding and bombing this country. This question is so closely connected with the question of limiting aerial armaments that it deserves examination.

* * *

One of the main obstacles to limiting air power is that it can be built up so rapidly; the huge air fleets of the last war were practically creations *ex nihilo*. A first step towards reaching an agreed limitation is certainly to reduce to an absolute minimum all sections of the Air Force which are not designed to play a part in definite military operations. The expansion of air forces required for reconnaissance and co-operation in joint operations is limited by the expansion of the other arms; the expansion of an independent air force is in itself simply limitless. The first step towards agreed limitation in the air is the realization that, as the Air Minister has come very near admitting, an independent air force cannot possibly be a protective force in the genuine sense of the word; it cannot prevent injury to the civilian population; it can only retaliate, and the effect of reprisals is, notoriously, not to prevent a repetition of the original attack, but to provoke intensified activity. We hope this question will be pressed. As we have frequently said in reference to naval armaments, the first step to agreed limitation of any weapon is to define its functions.

* * *

The question of licensing two-seater taxis in London deserves more general attention than it has yet received. The Home Secretary has been negotiating with the taxi-owners for a reduction of fares; and he has used the threat to license two-seaters as a bargaining lever. As he has failed to prevail on the taxi-owners to agree to the reductions he considers justifiable, it is possible that he may put his threat into execution, and he is understood to be considering the matter. But it seems to us

entirely wrong that two-seaters should be withheld from the London streets if the taxi-owners were willing to come to terms with the Home Secretary. There is far too much tendency nowadays to maintain anti-social and uneconomic restrictions in deference to vested interests. There is an overwhelming public case for the two-seater taxi. Anyone who observes the taxis that pass him on the streets will notice how large a proportion of them are occupied by single individuals. To insist that this prevalent need must be supplied by an unnecessarily large vehicle which is more costly to run than a vehicle adapted to the need is a grotesquely wasteful proceeding. The fact that the present taxis represent a considerable capital which it is undesirable to render valueless may be an argument for licensing two-seaters gradually; it is no argument for refusing to license them at all.

* * *

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is apparently incensed, as he well may be, by the excommunication of Mr. Spoor from the I.L.P. for venturing to advocate a working arrangement between the Liberal and Labour Parties. In last week's *FORWARD*, he wrote with some asperity on the subject, declaring that

"there is no danger, either in or out of Parliament of a Liberal-Labour alliance, but there is a very serious danger that a mixture of vain self-righteousness and suspicious credulity may disrupt the camp by false alarms."

Not content with this general warning, Mr. MacDonald went on to taunt the *NEW LEADER* with "pathetic nakedness" when, challenged to say what it would do if called to take office after an election which returned it in a minority, replied, he said, "that it would bring in a bill embodying the Socialist community, and on its defeat have another election." To this Mr. Brailsford retorted indignantly, in a letter to the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*, that the programme actually advocated in the *NEW LEADER* was to "take office, boldly outline the living-wage policy, introduce the first bills, and if they are thrown out appeal to the country."

"It is true," added Mr. Brailsford, "that, in our view, the logic of the living-wage policy must drive us on to deal with banking, the importation of food and raw materials, the key industries, and the land, but no one who had read our programme with candour could suppose that 'the first bills' would deal with these things, though, even at this stage, it would be well to outline the whole policy."

One is left wondering why Mr. Brailsford should object to Mr. MacDonald's neat summary of his policy.

* * *

The new campaigning season in China finds the two great rivals Wu Pei-fu and Chang Tso-lin acting in co-operation against Feng. Up to the moment this strange alliance has worked well. We have little reliable news; but it is obvious that Wu and his lieutenants have advanced rapidly from the South, while Chang and his right hand Li Ching-lin have moved towards Peking from the North, so that Feng and the Kuominchun armies are fighting on two fronts in the provinces round the capital. Past experience shows that the manoeuvres of the subordinate tuchuns are as important as the moves of the leaders, and the present situation offers exceptional chances for permutations and combinations. Sun Chuan-fang is a very important person in Wu Pei-fu's sphere of influence; he is at present co-operating with Wu, but may at any moment desert and play a lone hand. Chang's principal lieutenants, Li Ching-lin and the tuchun of Shangtung, have hitherto been steady and faithful; but as their loyalty proceeds more from hatred of Feng than love of Chang, they may act unexpectedly if Feng falls, and the *spolia opima* of Chinese government is to be divided between the successful generals. The two big leaders Chang and Wu are men of ability, and in co-operation might do much to establish a stable state of affairs; but they are old rivals, and it remains to be seen if they have learned by experience.

FORGETTING SWEDEN

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN once declared that he was in the habit of following the straight course because he found it the easiest. Sir Austen Chamberlain is, of course, about the last man in public life who can be charged with any failure in personal straightness. Indeed, a punctilious and exaggerated sense of honour, which leads him to set a high pledge-value on the most casual assurances, is probably an important cause of the perverse attitude which he has assumed upon the Council question. None the less there is a sense in which it is true to say that the difficulties with which he has been wrestling this week at Geneva are difficulties which he has created for himself owing to his failure to realize that there was a straight course for him to follow and that that straight course was also the easiest.

We ventured the opinion a fortnight ago that the chief explanation of Sir Austen's attitude lay in the fact that he had become converted to the League idea without appreciating that it was necessary to revise any of the traditional methods and maxims of diplomacy. His speech last Thursday in the House of Commons went far to confirm this view. He treated the issue throughout as though it were an ordinary diplomatic tangle in which different States with divergent interests put forward their points of view, with Britain standing outside as an honest broker, concerned only to facilitate a settlement acceptable to all parties. He agreed that nothing must be done which would endanger Locarno, or prevent Germany from entering the League; and he showed that he meant by this that Germany must be a party to any settlement. That was the extent of his concession to the opinion of the British people and the House of Commons. But, provided he could fix up some bargain, with the assent of Germany as well as of the other States concerned, he did not care two straws—so he left it to be inferred—what the basis of that bargain might be. Britain had supported the claim of Spain in 1921, and would not oppose it now, and, in general, Britain would not oppose any arrangement which might prove to supply "the way of peace." There was no suggestion in his speech that any larger issue was at stake, that the constitution of the League of Nations is a matter of importance in itself, on which it is desirable to adhere to principles that are at least defensible.

Now it may be granted at once that League purism might be carried too far, and that it would be the height of folly to cling obstinately to some point of principle if the effect were to be the immediate dissolution of the League. But it is one thing to admit that it may be necessary to adapt constitutional considerations to the exigencies of the moment, and quite another to treat these considerations as of no account at all. And Sir Austen Chamberlain's undiluted opportunism has led him to assess falsely even the factors in the diplomatic problem with which he is preoccupied. He seems almost to have forgotten Sweden; at any rate, M. Unden's unbending attitude seems to have come as a revelation to him, as well as to some of the British correspondents at Geneva.

"His (M. Unden's) immobility," reports the Special Correspondent of the *Times*, "is quietly sapping the moral of the opponents of his views. I have reason to believe that there is now little enthusiasm on the part of any of the candidates, and that some members of the Council are secretly delighted at the stand that Sweden is making."

And behind Sweden, and reinforcing her, is the general public opinion of the Assembly, another factor which Sir Austen seems hitherto to have left out of account.

"The feeling is certainly growing that instability at home, hints of abandoning the League, threats to obstruct its business, or a tendency to become involved in disputes are not qualifications for a permanent seat."

It was Sir Austen's cardinal miscalculation that before reaching Geneva he thought in terms of the interested States, and conceived his problem as one of effecting a deal between them. He is now learning the elementary League lesson that the disinterested States are a factor which cannot be disregarded, and that they are apt to hold their views with all the more tenacity because they are disinterested. If Sir Austen had understood the strength of disinterested opinion within the League, he would have realized at once, when the Council project was first mooted, that the best chance of the amicable settlement he desired was to take his stand firmly on the principle that the revision of the Council's composition must not be mixed up with Germany's entry, nor dealt with in a hole-in-a-corner way, but must be approached in the impartial spirit and by the open-handed methods which would be applied to the revision of a domestic constitution.

This is still the most practicable "way of peace"—viz., the admission at this stage of Germany alone, and the appointment of a Commission to advise as to the principles on which the Council's composition should be based. And it is becoming so increasingly apparent that this is the most practicable way, that we may hope that it will have been taken before these lines appear. There is, however, one serious issue that remains. Sir Austen informed the House of Commons that Britain supported the claim of Spain four years ago, and Mr. Baldwin added that he had now "renewed" this support, in deference to "continuity of foreign policy." Is it satisfactory, is it even tolerable, that the line taken by the Cabinet of the day in 1921, at a time when we were only feeling our way in League affairs, and of which the British public had hitherto known nothing, should be held to bind us now, and to preclude us from considering an important issue of principle upon its merits? It is true that the striking unanimity of British opinion in recent weeks related to the inadvisability of prejudicing just now the entry of Germany to the League, and that the general merits of the Spanish claim are another story. None the less, there is little doubt, we think, that British opinion is decidedly against this claim. Does British opinion weigh nothing, with our Ministers, against a legendary continuity? Spain has shown herself a good League member, and no one desires to say a word hurtful to her susceptibilities. But we are opening up an unending vista of trouble and intrigue if we extend the permanent seats beyond the Great Powers. It is far better to look in the direction of qualifying the projected system of rotation for the elected seats (as, for example, by providing that a State may continue on the Council if it secures a three-fourths majority in the Assembly), in order to enable States like Spain to retain their place, so long as there is a general desire that they should do so. The less the problem is treated in terms of Spain or Poland or Brazil, and the more it is treated in terms of objective constitutional proprieties, the better is the chance of a harmonious solution.

BROADCASTING: A POSTSCRIPT

THE text of the Broadcasting Committee's Report (Cmd. 2599) goes far to remove the apprehensions which we expressed last week. In proposing to substitute a public Commission for the present B.B.C., the Committee emphasize the importance of ensuring for the Commission a status of considerable freedom and detachment from the ordinary mechanism of the State.

"Within well-defined limits the Commission should enjoy the fullest liberty, wide enough to mark the serious duties laid upon it, and elastic enough to permit variation according to technical developments and changes in public taste. It would discourage enterprise and initiative, both as regards experiments and the intricate problem of programmes were the authority subjected to too much control. The aspirations and the public obligations of Broadcasting can best be studied by a body appointed *ad hoc*, endowed with adequate tenure, and concentrating on this particular duty. The Commissioners should therefore be invested with the maximum of freedom which Parliament is prepared to concede."

With this end in view they propose that the Commission should be a small body (between five and seven in number), not representing various interests, but composed of "persons of judgment and independence," who should take their duties seriously, and are therefore to be adequately paid for them, and who are to enjoy the independence and security of appointment for five years. The Commission is to be under obligation to take over the existing staff of the B.B.C., so as to maintain continuity and tradition.

The Committee are also alive to the inappropriateness of attempting at this stage to prescribe for broadcasting anything in the nature of a permanent constitution.

"On the one hand it is conceivable that Broadcasting might have to become a department of the State like the telephone service; on the other, it is possible that its character as a monopoly might have to disappear, and that the rights of transmitting should be distributed. While, therefore, it is essential that the new Commission should be so constituted as to command public confidence, it is equally clear that, should circumstances change, the Government shall be able to supersede or modify the Commission."

Accordingly, they seek to mark the experimental character of the new régime by proposing that the Commission should hold a terminable licence from the Postmaster-General, just as the B.B.C. now does, though they suggest that the licence "should run for not less than ten years and be renewable."

In general, no fault can be found with the perspective in which the Committee have conceived their problem, nor with the general spirit of their recommendations. They have no sympathy with attempts on the part of vested interests, whether the Press, concert-givers, or others, to fetter the development of broadcasting, in order to protect themselves against its competition. They propose that existing restrictions, such as that which limits the B.B.C. to news supplied to them through News Agencies, and given after 7 p.m., should disappear, and that the Commissioners should be entitled to all ordinary rights as regards the use of copyright material, whether in news or otherwise. They stress the importance of the educational possibilities of broadcasting, and suggest that the problem of catering for groups of listeners with different tastes may be met by the allocation of different wave-lengths for different subjects or different standards of treatment. They suggest also—a point on which we cordially agree—that

matters of controversy ought not to be entirely excluded from the purview of broadcasting, and that the proposed Commission should be free to experiment in this sphere.

We do not find it easy to form a definite mental picture of the human types to which the Commissioners, these half-dozen "persons of judgment and independence," will approximate in practice; nor can we envisage very clearly the nature of the work which is expected to occupy so large a portion of their time. If, as a sentence in the Report seems to indicate, they are to concern themselves with the detailed planning of the programmes, we suspect that the results may prove less satisfactory than if this work is left as it has been hitherto to the professional staff of the B.B.C. None the less, the project of a quasi-autonomous public corporation has many attractions, and if it is carried out in its integrity and in the spirit in which it is proposed by the Committee, it may well prove the most satisfactory arrangement possible.

It is, however, not so easy in practice, as it is on paper, to confer an independent status on a publicly owned institution; it is necessary to be on guard lest, in the process of translating the scheme into actuality, modifications may creep in, calculated to subject the Commission to the conditions which are apt to petrify Government Departments. In this connection the question of finance, to which we referred last week, is worth attention. The general view of the Committee is that the licence fee should remain at the present figure of 10s., that the Postmaster-General should retain such portion as is required to defray the expenses of collection and any other costs incurred by him, and that the balance should be available to the Commission for the development of the service. The Committee evidently contemplate that for a long time to come the Commission will require all this revenue, and, indeed, more; for they suggest that "the Commission should be empowered to raise Capital on the security of its income from licence-fees, and the Treasury might also be authorized to advance Capital for approved purposes." And their emphasis is presumably upon the "not until then" when they add:—

"On these conditions, and when the adequate service has been assured, but not until then, it is expedient that the surplus should be retained by the State."

But this combination of proposals suggests difficulties. If the Commission is to borrow on the security of its future income, it becomes important that it should know what this future income is likely to be. It will not know, if it rests with a Chancellor in budgetary difficulties to raid its revenue at any time on the ground that its service is "adequate." Nor, if the Treasury is encouraged to look in this direction for future contributions, is it likely to watch complacently the Broadcasting Commission queering the pitch meanwhile by pledging its prospective income for capital purposes. In short, there may be an attempt to bring broadcasting within the system of Treasury control more definitely than the Committee contemplate.

Perhaps this danger is not connected in an important degree with the question of public ownership. The revenue of the B.B.C. is already rigidly limited, and is threatened with curtailment. But it is none the less important that the issue of financial principle should be cleared up. It is thoroughly unsound that the expenditure of a new, developing, and financially remunerative industry should be treated on a par with ordinary

Governmental expenditure, and cut down whenever general retrenchment is the order of the day, merely because the State is the most convenient medium for the collection of its revenue. From a purely economic standpoint, it would be just as sensible to curtail capital expenditure in a growing industry, like motor-car construction, or artificial silk. It is of the first importance to assert the principle that broadcasting is entitled to use for its own development the revenue which it fairly earns.

M. BRIAND OVER-REACHES HIMSELF

PARIS, MARCH 9TH.

ABOUT nineteen years ago M. Clemenceau, who was then Prime Minister for the first time, announced to an astonished Chamber: "Nous sommes en pleine incohérence." The remark was a hit at M. Briand, who was a member of M. Clemenceau's Cabinet, and the occasion was the Bill for the Separation of the Churches from the State, of which M. Briand had charge. I should not be surprised if M. Clemenceau remembered this incident last Saturday. In any case, the incoherence produced by M. Briand's tactics on the former occasion was nothing in comparison with the chaos that has resulted from his tactics in regard to the financial question.

The English Press has almost unanimously put the whole blame of the present deplorable situation on the Chamber. Many Parisian papers have taken another and more realist view of the matter. In fact, whatever the shortcomings of the Chamber, M. Briand himself is far more to blame. If, instead of resorting to "every kind of wary expedient"—to quote the *Times*—he had had a financial policy and stuck to it, France might now have a Budget, and in any case the situation would have been clear. M. Briand's failure is an example of the danger of being too clever. He has always erred in that direction. His conception of parliamentary strategy is to play off one party against another, throwing a sop now to the Left and now to the Right, and he trusts to his incomparable powers of persuasion and lobby manipulation to pull him through. When he became Prime Minister for the first time, he inaugurated the policy of governing with shifting majorities, composed now of one combination, now of another, which threw French politics into confusion and made impossible the creation of a genuine party system. As a diplomatist, he has probably at this moment no equal in the world, and, the more secret the diplomacy, the better his chance of success. As a parliamentary leader he has never, in my opinion, been so successful, because he is constitutionally incapable of steering a straight course.

The failure of M. Briand's "wary expedients" on the present occasion does not surprise me, for I am among those that have foretold it from the first. It seemed to me as evident as it seemed to M. Lucien Romier that M. Briand's tactics would end in combining the Right and the extreme Left against him, and the amazing thing to me is that M. Briand himself did not realize that. The fact that he did not suggests that he is not quite up to his usual form. His blunder is astonishing in a man of his cleverness. Having made up his mind to govern with the Left and, for that reason, not to alienate even the Socialists, he chose in succession two Finance Ministers, both of whom were very unpalatable to the Left. M. Loucheur had to go, after the Chamber had been rushed into adopting the monstrous proposal of retrospective taxation, which

would have excited justifiable hostility in any country, and was particularly unwise in a country where all taxation is resented. His successor, M. Doumer, was still more unpopular on the Left, and obstinately opposed to the financial policy of the Cartel. Yet there is no doubt that the Cartel was right in holding that no new taxation was necessary, and that the Budget could be balanced by reforming the assessment and collection of the income tax. The only reason that I can suggest for M. Briand's refusal to adopt the financial policy of the Cartel is that he feared a conflict with the Senate.

M. Doumer, to do him justice, was quite ready to stand or fall by his financial policy, but M. Briand's refusal to break with the Left made that impossible. The result was that the Government had no policy at all, and the Chamber was left to its own devices. The most important proposals of the Government on the one hand and the Finance Committee on the other were rejected, and an emasculated measure was sent up to the Senate. M. Briand evidently hoped that, when the Senate had restored the Government proposals, the Opposition would help him to force them through the Chamber, and there he miscalculated. The Opposition, as he might have foreseen, refused to take the responsibility of unpopular taxation, disliked by the Government's own supporters, and M. Briand fell between two stools. In fact, M. Briand tried to govern with the Left on questions of foreign policy and with the Right on questions of finance. He divided the Left and failed to secure the support of the Right.

That this result has gravely discredited French parliamentary institutions cannot be doubted. The French parliamentary system is unworkable, and will never be workable unless and until the powers of the Senate are restricted. The only limitation of those powers provided by the Constitution has been violated by M. Briand's action in asking the Senate to restore taxes rejected by the Chamber. For the Constitution says that no financial measure must be brought before the Senate until it has been considered and "voted" by the Chamber. For years Radicals and Socialists have been talking of constitutional reform, but nothing has been done. Unless the matter is now taken up seriously, the very existence of parliamentary institutions may be endangered. The unlimited power of obstruction given to the Senate by the Constitution has been one of the chief causes of the impotence of Parliament since the foundation of the Third Republic. The Constitution does not even provide any means for settling a dispute between the two Houses. The example of France, by the way, is a warning against any "reform" of the House of Lords, which, with its present restricted powers, is the least objectionable second Chamber in the world.

The solution of the French financial problem is bound up with that of the political problem, which is insoluble so long as the present Chamber lasts. It is plainer than ever that the wise course would be to pass rapidly a Budget of some sort and a Bill providing for the return to single-member constituencies and then dissolve the Chamber, but it is unlikely that this course will be taken. If the parties of the Left were wise, they would allow the Opposition to take office and tolerate a Government of the Centre and the Right until a general election, but the most likely issue of the crisis is a Government leaning towards the Centre, but composed mainly of politicians of the Left. In some quarters there is a demand for yet another Cartel Government, although the Cartel seems to be finally disintegrated. It is more than ever impossible for the Socialists to join a coalition Ministry with the Radicals, and very difficult

for them to pledge their support to any Government. The recent by-election in the Department of Marne shows the discontent of the Socialist electors with the Cartel policy. At the general election the Radicals and Socialists had separate lists. At the by-election, when there were two seats to be filled, a Radical and a Socialist stood together and were elected, but their poll was about the same as that of the Radicals alone at the general election, and a comparison of the figures suggests that the majority of those who voted Socialist at the general election either voted Communist or abstained the other day. The total poll was smaller than in May, 1924, and the Bloc National lost votes. Only the Communists gained.

Next Sunday there will be a by-election for two seats in the second division of Paris, and it too is likely to show that the Communists have gained since May, 1924, when the constituency returned six deputies of the Bloc National, three of the Cartel des Gauches (who all happened to be Socialists), and two Communists. If there has been no change in the political tendency of the constituency, the two candidates of the Bloc National should have a chance of getting a clear majority on Sunday, but there are also two other candidates of the Right, described as "plébiscitaires," and really Fascists, who will no doubt detach votes from the Bloc National, and a second ballot is likely to be necessary. The Radical, Socialist, and Communist Parties are each running two candidates, and it is almost certain that the Communists will poll many more votes than either the Radicals or the Socialists. In that case, should there be a second ballot, the Socialists will be in a somewhat difficult position, for they will have to decide whether or not to withdraw in favour of the Communists. In any case, the election will be an interesting test of political feeling in Paris, for the constituency is about a third of the city within the fortifications. My belief is that it will show the Socialists to be very weak.

The French Socialist Party is at a critical stage in its history. If the policy of collaborating with the Radicals continues, the party will lose the greater part of the working-class vote, and, although it may gain the small bourgeoisie, who are already rallying to it in considerable numbers, it is unlikely to win over the peasant farmers, who, except in those parts of France where they are still under the influence of the Church, vote Radical because they are conservative and anti-clerical. Their Radicalism is that of the Senate, which in fact they elect. The Socialists have to decide whether they will continue to be a revolutionary and working-class party, or whether they will hand over the political representation of the working class to the Communists. In any case discontent of the workmen with the Socialist policy is likely to increase the Communist strength for the moment.

Even if something like order can be brought out of the present political chaos, I see little prospect of any real improvement in the financial situation in the near future. No party is in favour of the one thing necessary—the stabilization of the franc—and the illusion that it is possible to bring back the franc to something like its par value and thereby reduce prices has many victims, including the President of the Republic, if one may judge by his speech at Lyons on Sunday. The one cheering symptom is the recent circular of the Executive of the C.G.T., to the Trade Unions, in which the immediate stabilization of the franc was declared to be essential. The circular frankly said that stabilization would be followed by an economic crisis, a rise in prices, and perhaps some unemployment, but pointed out that such a crisis was inevitable sooner or later, and

that the alternative to stabilization was ruin. Unfortunately, the leaders of the C.G.T. are not in a position to form a Government. If they were, the situation would be more promising, for they have shown that they understand the financial question better than the politicians.

ROBERT DELL.

AT ST. STEPHEN'S ORATIONS WELCOME AND UNWELCOME (BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

MARCH 10TH, 1926.

"**A** LAS, how easily things go wrong," to even the ablest of Ministers if he blurts out in wrath everything that is in his mind. Last week, on one of the days of interminable debates on export credits and trade facilities, carried on amid spiritless verbiage in nearly empty houses, the question of Russia was raised, dismal and disconsolate, as Russia appears dismal and disconsolate always when members have nothing else to talk about. Suddenly Mr. A. M. Samuel, one of the ablest of Under-Secretaries, but inexperienced in Parliamentary tactics, rapped out smartly, "If a case were to come to me from the Export Credits Advisory Committee, asking me to authorize the use of public money for the purpose of giving credit facilities to Russia, I should decline to accede to it." Suddenly the House became a hubbub. The Labour members commenced to buzz and sizzle like a swarm of bees. The whole House fell on the author of this unfortunate aphorism; and, although he rose again and again to expostulate, the thing had been said and could not be unsaid. Mr. Runciman, whose ships travel into strange waters, assailed him from the Liberal side for refusing to do what, he asserted, the great private banks were doing. Sir John Simon produced quotations showing how much more Liberal were the assertions of his predecessors. The Labour members in long succession accused him of trying to strike and strangle this last best hope of man, represented by the Soviet Government. Even Tory supporters interested in Russian trade, such as representatives of the herring industry, which exports herrings to Russia no more, assailed him for his desperate declaration. For hours an interminable debate waged over an estimate which might have been passed as somnolently as that of the salaries and expenses of the War Graves Commission, which preceded it. And the sad thing is Mr. Samuel had no need to make any such declaration at all. He could have let the Advisory Committee advise, if it wished to, until it became tired of advising, and at the same time veto every particular application on the ground that in every case the security was not good enough, and that he was the sole judge in such a matter. But when Ministers explain "in the very simplest terms" they generally get themselves into trouble. Certainly, Mr. Gladstone invariably avoided this pitfall. One is reminded of the comment of Mr. Dooley in his criticism of President Kruger's refusal of the vote to the Uitlanders. "I would have given all of them the vote, only I would have counted the ballot papers afterwards."

Much of the interest of the League of Nations debate on Thursday has vanished with the subsequent revelation of the amazing events which have happened since at Paris and Geneva. Sir Austen Chamberlain was evidently oppressed with the weight of almost unanimous criticism in the Press; with the knowledge that most of his own party could not conceive why he did not speak out and say that he was going to Geneva for one purpose and one purpose only, to get Germany and Germany alone on to the League Council in fulfilment of the Locarno pledge of honour. He appeared to be prevaricating, and the prevarications excited suspicion, which he indignantly repudiated, that he had made secret arrangements incompatible with that end. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was ineffective—he is too much

engaged in furious attacks on or from his own followers outside to concentrate his attention on debates in the House—and it was left to Mr. Lloyd George, with severe and almost fierce cross-examination, to attempt to extract from the unfortunate Foreign Secretary what he really meant in a speech of platitude in which he obviously meant to say nothing. Mr. Baldwin gathered his somewhat battered majority together by pouring what oil was possible on the troubled waters, and succeeded in shepherding a majority of a hundred in a division rather unfortunately forced on the House by the Labour Party.

The first appearance of Sir Alfred Mond as a pillar of the Church and Constitution, in this debate, was not an unqualified success. His chilly reception was not due in any way to resentment against a lost leader by those who had once "learnt his great language, caught his clear accents, made him their pattern to live and to die." The coldness came rather from those to whom he had fled. This was in part due, I think, to the English sporting sense; which was not quite clear that when a member promises his association immediately to resign if they wish it, and when they immediately express the wish that he should resign, such a member should repudiate such promise on the ground that, in view of important social and industrial problems, his presence was essential in the House. I doubt if the younger Tories regarded his presence as essential in any case. Although perhaps content that the funeral baked meats should in due course coldly furnish forth the marriage tables, they recognized that there was some decent interval required, as in the case of Mr. Churchill, in order that the baked meats should be at least cold and not lukewarm. But it was partly due also to the nature of the speech of the convert; in which, in an endeavour to defend Sir Austen, he used the very arguments that Sir Austen least desired should be put forward and those which were most fatal to Sir Austen's pleadings; explaining that we should think of our friends first, that there was no reason why we should have any tenderness towards Germany, that German propaganda had captured the British public and a large proportion of the House, and that we should be more usefully occupied in considering the development of the great Empire to which we all belong. These remarks were received with murmurs of disapproval from all those around him, and moved even so mild a man as Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck into ejaculatory prayer. Perhaps it would be better for his own interests if this eager and impassioned imperialist should abstain even from good words, yea, though it were pain and grief to him, until he has fulfilled the promise made, even if rashly made, to his former constituents and has re-entered, with open doors and acclamation as representing a constituency more in conformity with his high principle and calling, the haven where he fain would be.

The usual interminable debate on unemployment, which occurred on the Labour Bill concerning machinery, was illuminated on Friday by one remarkable speech. The wrangle over what particular kind of committee containing what particular class of Minister should consider what particular variety of remedy should be applied to what special type of unemployed is, of course, part of the recognized method of attack by every Opposition on every Government, concerning a problem that neither Opposition nor Government can either appease or forget. Evermore there is "great argument about it and about," and evermore they "came out by that same door wherein they went." If creation of Ministries and formation and reformation of committees could have solved this problem it would have been solved long ago. But into the midst of this futility suddenly crashed the testimony of Mr. Shepherd, the newly elected Labour member for Darlington. All he said was, of course, quite irrelevant to the motion. But he is come from being schoolmaster in a remote village in the North to face Parliament with its paralyzing traditions and its rulership of an empire. He is young, good-looking, lacking in truculence, passionate and sincere in appeal. Repudiating facts and figures, he gave a series of illustrations from personal experience, living twelve miles from a railway station

but only a quarter of a mile from the nearest workhouse. He skilfully avoided going over the narrow barrier of sob-stuff. The House rose, as it always rises to any such appeal, and his speech concluded with an ovation as certainly one of the most successful maiden speeches of this Parliament. Whether such an oration can be repeated remains conjectural. Or whether, as in the case of so many other passionate pleaders for the poor, the contagion of the world's slow stain may not convert him from an idealist to a politician. There was no evidence of constructive thought, but only of earnestness and sincerity, qualities as welcome to the House as they are rare.

This week has been occupied by the usual motions accompanied by the usual protests for grabbing private members' time, and by the usual voting of vast sums of money on air and naval estimates, accompanied by the usual moans of protest that Parliament has lost all control over the details of expenditure. Private members have always had their time grabbed since Parliament first was, and there never has been and never will be in this country any detailed control of Government expenditure by the House of Commons *per secula seculorum*.

LIFE AND POLITICS

CHARACTERISTICALLY Mr. Ramsay Muir has broken with the convention that a university election should be a matter of the polite exchange of correspondence. He has insisted, very properly, on meeting graduates of the Combined Universities wherever they could be collected. He has all the qualifications for the job, and I hope to see him returned. A university teacher, a man of notably vigorous and well-informed mind, a good liberal fighter—what more do the educated progressives of the North desire? The well-equipped politician, grounded on historical and economic knowledge, is extraordinarily rare, and never was he more wanted. The amiable veteran opposed to him is justly popular in Manchester—and that is about all. Mr. Ramsay Muir is wanted in Parliament just now to bring the weight of university opinion to bear in the struggle against educational cheeseparing. His lecture on Gladstone at King's College the other day contained his powers in essence. He infused an academic discourse with an intellectual passion for the free play of progress, and earned from Lord Oxford a notable compliment.

* * *

As there is no Labour candidate this time, it is assumed that Mr. Muir has a fairly easy task. In 1924, on the figures as finally declared, Mr. Fisher came within two hundred votes of Sir Martin Conway, while Professor Findlay got 885 votes; so the calculation is that Mr. Muir should obtain two-thirds of the Labour electors and win with a comfortable margin. This calculation omits an important point. The above figures represent the final count under P.R. This time, as there is only one vacancy, P.R. does not apply. The only way of judging the real strength of the parties is to give the figures of the first preferences in 1924, namely, Conway, 2,231; Fisher, 1,333; Findlay, 861. Most of Conway's second preferences, of course, went to Fisher and enabled him to secure the necessary quota, but the fact remains that if this had been an ordinary election Conway would have had a majority over the total vote of both his opponents, and Fisher would have been in a minority of 898. If Mr. Muir wins, his victory will therefore be much more striking than might appear at first sight. On the other hand, it is natural to suppose that there will be a good many Progressives among the eight hundred younger graduates who are

voting for the first time, and that a good many Labour voters will follow Professor Weiss's example and vote for Muir.

* * *

I was once only in the presence of Colonel House, the great little wirepuller from Texas—I was one of an Anglo-American band summoned from Fleet Street to "see" him—that's about all it came to—at Chesterfield House, then, in the middle of the war, the American headquarters. He had been deep in one of those secret missions of which the world is now hearing. Colonel House, a slight man saved from insignificance by a pair of fine eyes, offered himself to cross-examination. He walked up and down the room with an air of sombre importance. Intelligent questions were asked, to which Colonel House after grave meditation would reply, "I can't say," or "it might be so," or "I can't go so far as that." Finally, in jocose desperation, a fellow-countryman asked: "Say, Colonel, will the weather be fine on your trip back?" Colonel House pondered anxiously, and replied, "Maybe—but don't say I said so." We retreated in awed silence. Reading the *Intimate Papers*, I was struck by the comic contrast of Colonel House's intense discretion then, and his excessive volubility now. The strong, silent man!

* * *

When General Booth died, I remember, sceptics prophesied that the Salvation Army would go into a decline. Everything seemed to hinge on that formidable personality. I don't pretend to know from the inside the real state of the Army now: it would be interesting to know. The great social changes since the first crusade must have had their reflection in changes of spirit and method. But the Army goes on fighting, beyond the ken of the polite and indifferent, who only see the pathetic and devoted collectors on the streets and hear the dreary noise of the wayside services. General Bramwell Booth—it is no fault of his—has never captured the crowd like his amazing old father. He is mild and benignant: General Booth was narrow and sharp as a hatchet. He was as thorough a dictator as Mahomet, and had about as much use for criticism. I saw a good deal of him in the days when he was conducting his famous mission by motor-car: the modern version of Wesley's pilgrimage. I found him a very human old man; a compound of intellectual crudity, iron will, and the emotions and vanity of a child. He ruled the Army as a despot: the soldiers trembled and obeyed the man—but the cause through the man.

* * *

In a few years I suppose the uncovered 'bus will be as scarce as the hansom cab. The covered 'bus can be filled in bad weather, and is therefore bound to win commercially, as the bigger and greedier brown rat was bound to beat the black rat. Let one of the multitude of unconsulted lovers of the 'bus-top raise an ineffectual lament, all the same. The 'bus-top is the last fresh-air refuge left to London travellers. The Tubes grow steadily more asphyxiating; there is no air in trams. I shall be told that the new sheltered 'bus-tops have windows. So they have, but people who enjoy the wide draught of heaven dread the partial draught from a window, and in practice the 'bus-top will be about as healthy as a club smoking-room. The healthy ride on the top of a 'bus is being taken away: a big change in social habit, and Londoners as usual will grumble and do nothing. We are the most patient and fatuously good-humoured of the world's populations. Perhaps somebody will ask a question in Parliament. Since evasion was scientifically studied, question-time has been worthless for the ventilation of grievances. The defence has beaten the attack,

It is good to see that we have still enough influence at Rome to secure punishment for the Fascist roughs who assaulted young Mr. Stokes. The Italian officials are suffering from an acute attack of patriotic fever; but if they upset the tourist industry their hotel keepers will have something to say. One's own observation and correspondence show that there is real danger of frightening the tourists, as the Germans have been frightened. Blackshirted officials infest the trains and make themselves unpleasant. A few months ago in a train near Milan I witnessed a painful scene, when some harmless Germans were ferociously abused and threatened for using a sleeping pillow as a footstool. I could give a list of such incidents, either heard of or seen. Italy swarms with parodies of Mussolini. Happily the people are as friendly as ever. They know, if their masters do not, that bad manners to the nation's guests do not pay.

* * *

I have spent some happy hours in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, whose ruin has been hailed with such rejoicing. It was small and ludicrously inconvenient—yet what bright ghosts haunted that narrow stage. "The worst theatre in the world," says Mr. Shaw in his slapdash manner, yet it was something to have had a stage for Shakespeare when the commercial theatre despised him—as it still does more or less. I hope the sensible thing will be done. The old theatre looked like a cross between a German helmet and a bride's cake. Let us have a successor in keeping with Shakespeare's town, still, after all the bedevillments of the idolators, a comely place, bits of which Shakespeare would recognize could he return. (The most eloquent spot is an empty space, where you trace the walls in which he lived and died.) What is wanted is so obvious that it may not be done—a Shakespeare Theatre. I mean a theatre of the kind Shakespeare knew and for which he planned his plays, a theatre such as their living structure demands. Let there be one stage at least where Hamlet can be given without torturing its rhetorical amplitude to fit a "picture" frame. Otherwise Mr. Poel has pioneered in vain.

* * *

I was buying stamps in a Post Office the other day when a taxi-driver came in for a postal order. As he paid his money he said cheerily to the dour assistant. "Pleasant weather to-day." No answer. As he counted his change he persisted, "Better weather than we've been having." Silence. Turning to me he remarked, "I — well knew he wouldn't." I quote this trivial incident because I believe it explains the popular estimate of the Post Office and its works as inefficiency qualified with rudeness. An acquaintance who had the heroic job of looking at the leading articles in all the chief papers on the transfer of broadcasting to the State, tells me that in every one there was expressed uneasiness over the coming Post Office control. The Post Office has an enormous fund of ill-will to draw upon; every time one is "cut off" in the middle of a talk adds to it. Besides this, there is on more general grounds disquiet about the dangers of placing this potent weapon of propaganda in the hands of Government. Can we trust every future Government to keep their hands off it? Is it known that even now Ministerial pronouncements are free from the censorship?

* * *

I cannot confirm the story that Mr. Baldwin, after hearing Sir Alfred Mond's speech on Locarno, exclaimed, "Have I gained a follower or merely caught a disease?"

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MARY MACARTHUR

SIR,—There is a passage in the review of Mary Macarthur's life which appears in your issue of February 27th on which, as her intimate friends and colleagues, we ask for space to comment.

The writer speaks of her "hatred" for one Labour Leader and "contempt" for another, and so mars what is otherwise an admirable review.

The friendship which existed between herself and her husband with Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald continued during their lives, and we can bear witness to the respect and affectionate regard which constituted her attitude to Mr. Arthur Henderson throughout that long association in the work of the Women's Trade Union League and of the Labour Party.

It is because of our knowledge that the erroneous expressions used in the review would have caused pain to Mary Macarthur that we ask for the insertion of this letter.—Yours, &c.,

GERTRUDE M. TUCKWELL,
MADELINE J. SYMONS.

13, Chester Terrace, S.W.
March 9th, 1926.

SIR,—In Mr. C. F. G. Masterman's charming and sympathetic sketch of Mary Macarthur, there is one sentence to which I feel I must take exception—namely, the reference to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and to "Uncle Arthur."

The statement is not only wide of the truth in a description of her feelings for these colleagues in later years, but it is calculated to cause quite unnecessary pain, which I am sure would not be Mr. Masterman's intention.

For Mr. Arthur Henderson in particular, Mary had a great affection and friendliness, so much so that when, after the Scarborough Conference, he went into a nursing home to undergo an operation, Mary—herself then very ill—made a special journey to the home, in order to have an opportunity of saying a few comforting words to him.—Yours, &c.,

MARGARET G. BONDFIELD.
28, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.
March 4th, 1926.

SIR,—I have read with much regret Mr. Masterman's article in *THE NATION* on the life of Miss Macarthur.

It is to my mind unforgivable to use the dead in order to make an attack on the living. I desire to say—with all the emphasis at my command, and as one who was closely connected with Miss Macarthur—that she always regarded Mr. Henderson not only with the warmest feelings of affection, but with the highest respect for his judgment and sagacity. I have often heard her speak of him; he was a man in whom she had full confidence.

With regard to the other leader, whom Mr. Masterman is pleased to say she hated, it is true that she was never on very intimate personal terms with him, but they worked together harmoniously on many important pieces of work, and I think that no one would have dared to speak in that way while she was alive.

You have published the attack; I think it is right that you should publish this protest, on the behalf of one who cannot now speak for herself.—Yours, &c.,

A. SUSAN LAWRENCE.

41, Grosvenor Road,
Westminster Embankment.

[Mr. Masterman writes:—

"I never should dream of using the dead in order to make an attack on the living. Nor should I ever dream of saying that Mary Macarthur hated Mr. Arthur Henderson. I doubt if anyone does. In a review of necessity compressed, I tried to exhibit her reactions to people living and dead, including myself. As my friend Miss Bondfield knows, and as Mrs. Hamilton well brings out, she was a fiery and tempestuous as well as most lovable creature. She regarded compromise as cowardice or crime. She would so completely identify a man with his public action that, if she disapproved that public action at any time, it was the man who would be the object of wrath and disapproval. She never

failed to express her disapproval in emphatic terms. Perhaps it would be true to say that she could entertain, at the same time, anger and affection; that she was always ready to forgive, even though her mind condemned past action; and that, I suppose, at the bottom of her heart, she really hated no one."]

TAMBER

SIR,—“Doe you lyke my newe phansy in the matere of Spelynge? I have growen wery of Spelynge wordes allwaies in one waye and now affecte diversite,” Sir Walter Raleigh once wrote; and, of course, Mr. Roger Fry has every right to disport himself as he pleases. But in spelling “timbre” as he does, he has behind him, I believe, the authority of Mr. Logan Rearsall Smith (S.P.E. Tract III.), supported by a correspondent in Tract X., the analogies being amber, camber, and chamber. Thus it is not by fancy but by principle that Mr. Fry is trying to impose upon us a pronunciation—not a spelling only—which all those from whom I have inquired dislike. The cases are not on a par, and we can leave the vexed question of spelling reform to scholarship, and rely on usage and common sense. If people choose to write of a theatre cue or of poets’ rimes, our ears at least cannot be offended, but here the case is different. Most people, I am almost sure, if they say timbre rather than tone or quality, pronounce it in French, even if it be in what Mr. Eliot would call demotic French. I suspect that Mr. Fry does so also. Why try to standardize an unusual pronunciation?

There are, in the main, three dialects imposing themselves upon our speech. In certain callings P.S.P. (Public School Pronunciation) is the rule; in others, thanks to the glorious spread of education, cockney is general; in a third group there is a language Mr. St. John Ervine believes to come from Oxford, though it really comes from Oxford Street. It is to this last dialect, I imagine, that tamber should belong. But because Oxford Street talks of, say, the diplomatic porparlours of nave statesmen, need we at once alter the spelling, and pronounce that way ourselves? As a matter of fact, pronunciation changes lawlessly, of its own accord, regardless of spelling. We no longer say obleege and tay, though we spell the words as Pope did. Similarly, while my old uncle ‘Ubert had a sense of ‘umour, my young nephew Hubert has a sense of humour. So is it not, Sir, a vain, as well as an ungainly thing, to timpere with our spelling?—Yours, &c.,

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

OLD AGE AND WIDOWS' PENSIONS FOR THE WEALTHY

SIR,—Ex-officers and others with war-service, whose incomes before and since the war have always been and still are sufficiently large to exempt them from contributing to National Health Insurance, do not for the most part understand the conditions under which, on terms extremely favourable to themselves (and unfavourable to the taxpayer), they may now, by favour of a Parliament pledged to the utmost economy, become eligible for the various and substantial benefits of the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925. Such misunderstanding is in no way remarkable, for in many instances the benefits offered must seem far “too good to be true,” and are available, irrespective of past or present income, for those who satisfy the simple conditions; namely, that their service in the forces during the Great War lasted at least two years, of which at least the earliest part (however short) must have been in the ranks, and that they did not before serving two years accept permanent regular commissions. A commission in the Naval Reserve, the New Army, the Army Reserve, or the Territorial Force, if it followed some service in the ranks, does not disqualify. Any man, however wealthy, who can satisfy those conditions may elect before July 4th next to become a “voluntary contributor,” paying 1s. 4d. weekly (nearly £3 10s. yearly), and thus establish rights (1) to old age pensions for himself and his wife (10s. per week each) at the age of sixty-five; (2) to pensions for his widow and young children if he die before reaching that age, and (3) to the usual sickness, disablement, maternity, and any “additional benefits” under the Health Insurance Acts.

All men with two years' war-service are now presumably at least twenty-seven years of age; very many are between

the ages of forty-five and sixty. The older they are, within these limits, the more favourable is the opportunity offered. For all contributions are on the same scale, and all cease at the age of sixty-five. Thus an eligible ex-Service man who is now aged fifty-five may, however large his income, contribute 1s. 4d. per week until he is sixty-five, by which time the total of his contributions, disregarding any loss of interest thereon, will be less than £35. At any time during the last eight years of the ten years during which he continues to contribute, he can draw 15s. weekly if he is temporarily ill; or if he dies during that period his widow, and his children (if under the prescribed age), can respectively draw widows' and orphans' pensions. If he lives to be sixty-five, he then receives, in return for his maximum total contribution of £35, a permanent pension for himself to the value of £26 annually, and as much again for his wife when she reaches the same age.

Whether the Government and the House of Commons really intended to provide such amazing benefits for rich men whose war-service of two years happens to have been in the ranks or to have included at its commencement some period in the ranks is perhaps doubtful. But a study of Section 46 of the National Insurance Act, 1911, Section 1 of the National Insurance (Navy and Army) Act, 1914, Sections 13 (1) and 44 (5) of the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925, and of Memo 243/X (Paras. 2 (b) and 3), issued by the Minister of Health, will satisfy any incredulous reader that the facts are as stated.—Yours, &c.,

BENEFICIARY.

FOX-HUNTING

SIR,—The "glorious" hunting doings near Chequers when, at the close of a sanguinary day, Little Freddie B— saw the fox killed from the garden wall and was blooded by the Squire and presented with the mask, brought to my

mind some noteworthy remarks of the great Founder of Christianity about offending one of these little ones or causing one of these little ones to stumble, and I recalled something about a great millstone round the neck and the depths of the sea as suitable decoration and destination for offenders against the little ones. Perhaps those who took part in this Hunt do not believe in Christianity, and these sayings would not interest them. Otherwise one might have ventured the suggestion that to allow little Freddie B— to watch the dispatch of the despairing driven fox, whose acknowledged gallantry yet proved no defence for him from the bloodthirst of the Hunt, and to disgustingly smear the little lad with blood and present him with the poor, horrid, grinning mask as with a treasure, "holy" treasure, I think the humorous report had it, was to desecrate the innocence of childhood, outrage natural kindly instincts, in short, to grossly sin against this little one and to richly merit the condemnation referred to above. We may suppose that little Freddie B— now regards the merciless chasing and hustling, the routing out and about, and the final destruction of a miserable creature, with next to no chance of escape, by a troop of riders and a pack of hounds, as fine fun and a laudable exercise for the manly. The Hunt at Chequers need not be held accountable if, in spite of its sanguinary offices and example, this little fellow should somehow succeed in growing up with any adequate sense of fair play and compassion for the distressed. The shameless lack of reverence for child nature displayed by the Hunt at Chequers should arouse the indignant remonstrances of all who love and respect children. And it may not be beside the mark to inquire what was the Prime Minister doing in that galère?—Yours, &c.,

ADA POOLE.

11, St. Aubyns, Hove.
February 27th, 1926.

DIARY OF AN EASTWARD JOURNEY

By ALDOUS HUXLEY.

II.

IT has been our good fortune, while in Bombay, to meet Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the newly elected President of the All-India Congress and a woman who combines intellectual power with charm, sweetness with courageous strength, a wide culture with originality, and earnestness with humour in a way almost unique in my experience of human beings. If all Indian politicians are like Mrs. Naidu, then the country is fortunate indeed.

At a tea-party in her rooms, a young Mohammedan of Arab descent recited some verses in Urdu by the modern Panjabi poet, Ekbal. The subject was Sicily (and "Sicily," alas, was the only word in the poem which I could understand). The poet, we were told, had been inspired to write while passing through the Straits of Messina on his return from a European voyage, and his poem was in the nature of a lament—a Mohammedan's indignant lament that the island which had once belonged to the Mussulmans should now be in the hands of infidels. I did not say so at the time, but I must confess that the idea of Sicily as a Mohammedan country cruelly ravished from its rightful owners, the Arabs, struck me as rather shocking. For us good Europeans, Sicily is Greek, is Latin, is Christian, is Italian. The Arab occupation is an interlude, an irrelevance. True, the Arabs in Sicily were the best sort of civilized Arabs. But it is hard for us to regard them as anything but trespassers on that classical ground. And now I was expected to look upon Theocritus's island—just as the Italians before the war looked on the Trentino and other fragments of *Italia irredenta*—as a piece of "unredeemed Araby." It was asking too much. For the first moment, I felt quite indignant—just as indignant, no doubt, as the poet had felt at the sight of those once Mohammedan shores now polluted by the Christians. In the traveller's life, these little lessons in the theory of relativity are daily events.

The words of the poem were incomprehensible to me. But at least I was able to appreciate the way in which

it was recited, or rather chanted—for the stanzas were set to an almost regular recurrent melody in the minor key. Each verse began with a stirring phrase that rose, like the call of a trumpet, from the dominant to the tonic, and, at the next strong beat, to the minor third. After that, the melody mournfully wandered; there were suspended notes and long shakes on a single vowel. It was thus, I felt sure, as I listened, it was thus that the Greek choruses must have been recited—to a chant kept well within the limits of a single octave, a chant (to our ears, at least) somewhat monotonous, sung without strain, more in a speaking voice than in what we should regard as a singing voice. And in the suspended notes, in the shakes and warblings over a single long-drawn syllable, I seemed to recognize that distinguishing feature of the Euripidean chorus which Aristophanes derides and parodies in the "Frogs."

This evening a congratulatory address was presented to Mr. Patel, the new Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, by the members of his community, an agricultural sub-caste of Gujarat. Other members of the community have broken through the traditional tram-mels—the hall was full of men who had left the ancestral plough for work in the city—but none has previously risen to a position so exalted as that attained by Mr. Patel. "From Ploughboy to President" was the phrase—Indian journalists, like their colleagues across the sea, have a weakness for phrases—in which the newspapers summed up Mr. Patel's career.

We accompanied Mrs. Naidu to the function, and, as her guests, found ourselves sitting in places of honour on the platform. The hall was crowded. The heat, though the sun had set, was prodigious. (It is one of the peculiarities of the Bombay climate that the temperature rises, or at any rate seems to rise, during the first hours of the night.) In the garden, outside, a band was playing the fox-trots of two or three seasons ago.

The programme of the function had been carefully worked out. A chorus of children was to sing during the

period of waiting before Mr. Patel entered. Somebody was to recite a congratulatory poem when he had taken his seat. Then there were to be speeches, with Mr. Patel's reply, and the presentation of the address in its silver casket to finish off the proceedings. A perfect programme, on paper; but in practice, as it turned out, not quite so good as it might have been. For the band played and the audience talked all through the children's singing; indeed, it was only quite by chance, because I happened to notice that they were opening and shutting their mouths in an unnatural, fish-like sort of way, that I came to know they were singing at all. And when the reciter began intoning his congratulatory poem, the indefatigable band struck up the tune of "Why did you Kiss that Girl?" piercingly. The poem was lost. Then the speech-making began. The band was silenced, at last. But by this time some few thousands of Bombay's innumerable population of crows had settled in the trees outside the hall and were discussing the question, as gregarious birds will do at sunset, of retiring for the night. Their cawing was portentous. Never in Europe have I heard anything like it. I was sitting on the platform, within a few feet of the speakers; but their voices were quite inaudible, even to me. It was only some half an hour later, when the crows had dropped off to sleep, that any word can have reached the audience. After that the proceedings went off pretty smoothly, and with only a little hitch or two about the reading of the address and the presentation of the casket to mar the solemnity of the occasion.

I was reminded very much of analogous functions in Italy. There is no word of which Italian journalists are fonder than the word *solemne*. Every ceremony of which you read an account in an Italian newspaper is solemn—solemn foundation-stone layings, solemn depositings of wreaths on tombs, solemn celebrations of centenaries, solemn royal entrances and exits. In the papers, as I say, all these things are solemn. In practice, however, they are rarely anything but slipshod, haphazard, and, to Northern eyes at any rate, ineffective and unimpressive. The good Catholic who comes to Rome in the hope of seeing noble and soul-stirring religious ceremonies, generally returns disappointed to his own country. The fact is that they order these things better in France, in England, in Belgium, in Germany—in any Northern land. We Northerners stage-manage our effects more professionally than do the people of the South. We take pains to impress ourselves; and at the same time we give the ceremony which we have staged every chance of seeming impressive to us by deliberately throwing ourselves into a serious state of mind, and consistently keeping our seriousness till the function is over. The Southerner declines to take trouble over the details of stage-management, and will not be bothered to hold one mental attitude for a long time at a stretch. To us, in consequence, he seems disgracefully slipshod, cynical, and irreverent.

But we must not be over-hasty in our judgments. The Southerner has his own traditions about these matters, and they happen to be different from ours. In this respect, I should guess, his habits of thought and feeling are nearer to the Oriental's than ours. Let us try to understand before we condemn.

We call the Southerner slipshod because he tolerates shabbiness among his grandeurs and permits his solemnities to be marred by a ludicrous inefficiency. But he could retort by calling us crassly unimaginative because we are incapable of seeing the fine intention through the inadequate medium of its expression, of appreciating the noble general effect in spite of the shabbiness of the details. For in matters of art, he would argue (and a religious ceremony, a civic or political function are forms of art, being only solemn ballets and symbolical charades) it is the intention and the general effect that count. Those little struts and flying buttresses of marble, with which the Greeks strengthened their statues, are absurd, if you choose to consider them closely. But they are meant to be ignored. Structurally, a sham façade is ludicrous; the Southerner knows it, of course, just as well as Mr. Ruskin. But, more wise than Ruskin, he does not fly into a passion of moral indignation over the

falsehood of it; he permits himself to enjoy the genuine grandiosity of its appearance when seen from the right angle. In church, the priest may gabble, as though he were trying to break a world's record, the acolytes may pick their noses, the choir boys sing out of tune, the vergers spit; we Northerners are revolted, but the wisely indulgent Southerner passes over these trivial details and enjoys the fine general effect of the ecclesiastical ballet in spite of its little blemishes. But if he enjoys it, the Northerner now asks, why doesn't he at least sit still, refrain from laughing chatter, look, and, looking, make himself feel, consistently serious? To which the other will retort by deriding the Northerner's slowness and inelasticity of mind, his pomposity, his incapacity for frankly feeling two emotions at once, or at any rate in very rapid succession. "I can see ludicrous and shabby details just as clearly as you do," he will say, "and, like you, I deplore them. But I keep my sense of proportion and do not permit mere details to interfere with my appreciation of the general effect. . . . You have a talent for high seriousness; but I can smile and feel solemn within the same minute. In church I pray fervently at one moment, I am transported by the beauty of the ceremonial (in spite of the shoddy details), and the next I make eyes at the young woman across the aisle or talk to my neighbour about the price of rubber shares. Operatic airs, I know, are stagey and conventional, and I deride the ludicrously strutting tenor who sings them; but at the same time I rapturously applaud his bawling, and abandon myself, even while I mock, to the throaty passion of the music. Your mind is clumsier, more stiffly starched than mine. You can only be one thing at a time, and you regard as shocking the nimble emotional antics of those more fortunately endowed than yourself, or more reasonably brought up. For my part, I can only pity you for your limitations."

The speeches, all but that of Mrs. Naidu, who gave us English eloquence, were in Gujarati, and for me, therefore, no better than gibberish. I amused myself by listening for the occasional English words with which the incomprehensibility was powdered. "Gibber, gibber, gibber, Bombay Presidency"; it was thus that I should have reported a typical speech of the evening. "Gibber, gibber committee gibber gibber gibber minority report gibber gibber Government of India gibber gibber gibber George Washington gibber Edmund Burke gibber gibber gibber Currency Commission gibber gibber gibber gibber. . . ." It was thus, I reflected, that our Saxon fathers borrowed from the invaders' speech the words for which they could find no equivalent in their own debased, post-Conquest English. Listening to the incomprehensible chatter of his foreign vassals, the Norman baron would have been amused to catch, every now and then, the sound of such familiar words as "army," "castle," "law."

The function came to an end. Festooned with flowers—for there had been a generous distribution of garlands, by which even we, albeit quite undeserving, had profited—we followed our hostess into the garden. There, under palm trees, we drank a kind of richly perfumed soda-water, we ate strange dumplings stuffed with a mince-meat that was at once sweet and violently peppery—chopped mutton mixed with a vitriolic jam—and tried to take the burning taste of them away with little cakes and sandwiches, slabs of almond icing and fried savouries. At the other side of the garden, safely removed from possible contamination, the orthodox refreshed themselves with special foods prepared by cooks of guaranteed good family. White-bearded and most majestically robed, Mr. Patel moved among the guests, looking like a minor, even a major, prophet—but a prophet, as we saw when he sat down at our table, with a most reassuringly humorous twinkle in his eyes.

It was nearly nine when we got back to the hotel. Coming up from dinner, an hour later, we found our room magically perfumed by the tuberose and champaks of our garlands. That night, and all next day, though they were quite withered, the flowers poured out their scent, and the wind driven down on us by the electric fan in the ceiling was a warm air impregnated with strange and tropical sweetness.

WINTER IN THE HEDGEROW

WINTER presses hardly on the hedgerow world, on the many little creatures that live beneath the tangle of undergrowth that fills the ditch and clothes the hedgebank; for this jungle of grasses, mares'-tails, ferns, and other plants, shelters a vast amount of life, a strange world of whose inhabitants we glean glimpses now and then, as when a little red mouse slips along the bank, or we see a thrush pulling a snail from its hiding place.

With the coming of autumn we get more of these glimpses, for the chill, frosty nights thin the hedgebank jungle, cutting down the more tender plants, withering the rest, and turning them sere and yellow, while the leaves fall from the fence above and leave it as a mere skeleton of gaunt bare bushes, gaunt and bare, that is, save for the jewellery of berries, the scarlet hips and the red haws that will presently feed the hungry birds.

Then many a mouse run, the high road by which the little furry people go to and fro, is exposed to the gleams of the wintry sun, and to the keen eye of the watchful kestrel hovering against the cold blue of the sky. High above he hangs, poised on quivering wings, scanning all beneath with those wonderful eyes—and woe to the mouse that scuttles down that exposed highway. Down comes the hawk, falling literally as “a bolt from the blue,” and the mouse has gone before it had even time to fear.

But besides exposure to watchful foes, the little people of the hedgerow have the problem of supplies to face. Some do without—Prickles, the hedgehog, for one. When the air nips keenly, and fat spiders fall from their snares to hide away who knows where, the hedgehog goes questing down the ditch, searching not for earthworms, grubs, beetles, or other small fry in which he delights, but for nest-making material. Dry leaves, grass, &c., serve his purpose. Many a mouthful of bedding does he carry home to that rabbit-hole which he has appropriated for his dwelling, until he has accumulated as snug a bed as any creature could wish to sleep in, and then he curls himself up. The winds may blow, the flying leaves may drift into his doorway and fill it up, the snow may come and cover all with a white blanket, but the hedgehog is sleeping serenely, calmly indifferent to the worst the winter may do; and so he will hibernate until the spring warmth rouses him—and the grubs on which he lives.

There is another sleeper in the fence-bank, for that quaint little roly-poly ball of fat we call the dormouse also retreats underground. All summer it has lived aloft, in a fragile aerial nest, but that ball of leaves and of honeysuckle bark was no dwelling for cold weather, and down it came. Now it is tucked away, rolled up inside a ball of grass and leaves, that is hidden at the end of a mouse run beneath an old tree stump, all that remains of a great oak that once stood in the hedge. Unconscious, like the hedgehog, winter supplies do not worry the hibernating dormouse, for it has them on its person, in the shape of the fat it stored up while food was plentiful. So there it lies, while the voles and long-tailed mice, non-hibernating species, scour ditch, bank, and bushes for food.

Then it is that the scarlet burden of the rose bushes and the red load of the thorn bushes are drawn upon—up aloft go the long-tailed mice and the bank voles, run out to the end of the thorny twigs, nip off a berry, bear it back, carry it to some convenient place, and there feast at their leisure.

Nearly every old bird's-nest tells the story of these midnight raids, for each one is filled to the brim with scarlet rinds and vermilion seeds, left over after the sweet pulp has been eaten. What feasting the cold winter moon must look down upon!

But it is not only the mice by night that raid the hips and haws, for the birds visit the hedgerow daily and feed on them too. The handsome greenfinch comes, perches on the swaying twigs, balances itself with its yellow painted wings, and squeezes the sweet pulp from the fruit. It is the rose berries it prefers, leaving the hawthorn fruit for blackbirds, fieldfares, and redwings.

Thrushes, too, come to the feast when nothing else is to be had, but they prefer earthworms and such fare.

When the hedgebank is locked in the iron grip of frost, the thrush finds life very hard. It hops about with puffed-out feathers, vainly trying to keep itself warm, and seeks eagerly for grubs. It peeps into the mouse runs, it turns over the leaves, and pries into every crack and crevice, searching anxiously for anything edible, especially for snails. Woe to any unfortunate snail on which its keen eye may alight. That it has withdrawn into its shell and sealed the mouth matters not a jot to the bird, for it simply picks it up and carries it off to the nearest anvil. Every thrush has its anvil, a stone or other conveniently hard object, on which snails can be beaten until their shells are broken to bits. About a favourite anvil the shells will lie in piles, yellow, brown, and striped fragments telling of the sport enjoyed.

Not only is the hedge hunted by the thrush; the wren, hedge-sparrow, and other small birds also search it diligently. They seek smaller game than snails, they look for the smallest grubs, insects, and spiders, and find them hidden in the crannies. It is they who find many of the fat spiders and other wee things that disappeared so mysteriously in the autumn. Sharp eyes scan the secret recesses between the tree roots and beneath the ferns, but however industrious these little feathered people may be, it is a mystery to me how they find during severe weather sufficient insect fare to keep the engine of life turning in their fragile bodies.

One of the worst winters of recent years for birds was that of 1916-17, when hard weather set in early and continued, with breaks, until late in the spring. Thousands of birds went south, migrating to escape it, but numbers remained, only to suffer, and in many cases to die. The long-tailed tit, a non-migratory species, was almost exterminated in the Midlands, where it has hardly yet, nine years later, made good the losses it suffered. Blackbirds and thrushes died in large numbers, and the survivors were even seen in their desperate extremity pecking at the bodies of their comrades.

I shall never forget seeing the feeble thrushes, painfully hopping balls of feathers, scratching weakly among the crisp leaves on the hedgebanks in the hope of finding an overlooked snail. It was an awful winter, yet no species came through it better than the fragile insectivorous hedge-sparrow. All through the most severe weather I saw the little brown bird slipping like a winged mouse about the fences, and when the spring came its numbers seemed much as usual. How it found a living only it, and the minute creatures that hide away in the hedgebottoms, could tell us; but even the tiny wren managed also to hold its own. What hard work, what incessant searching must have gone to saving their little lives!

But indeed throughout the winter, whether the weather be mild or severe, our hedgebank is a scene of incessant activity. A light fall of snow will reveal how much goes on in and about it; for the snow acts as a recording medium, on which is written, in padmark and trail, the story of the creatures that traverse it by night and day. The rabbits' footprints lace the powdery crystals with trails that cross and recross, leading to and from their burrows that tunnel the bank. Then there are the padmarks of the fox, telling how he called at the rabbit burrow, sniffed about it, and went on, only to pass through the fence at a certain smuse, a passage-way well known to him and his comrades, after which he trotted off across the meadow. Besides this there are countless mouse tracks, fairylike impressions that have barely marked the snow, and which lead to and from the burrows that plunge beneath it; for hardly has the snow fallen than mice and voles begin to tunnel beneath it, rejoicing in the shelter that enables them to go their way unseen by hawk or owl. Similar tunnels are made by the mole, who during the frost has found the undergrowth-covered ditch a moist and cosy spot. Now it scuttles to and fro under the safety of the snow. Of bird tracks it is superfluous to speak, for the dainty four-toed impressions are everywhere, telling how robins, thrushes, and hedge-sparrows have hunted for food—

food and yet more food is the cry of the hedgerow population; but all things have an end, and an end comes to the stress and struggle going on in our hedgebank world. The spring comes, the sun warms the countryside, insects appear as if by magic, the sleepers wake up, the dormouse and the hedgehog come forth, and the thrush, his troubles forgotten, takes perch on the nearest tree-top and welcomes the spring in glorious song.

FRANCES PITT.

MUSIC

A DEFENCE OF OPERA

THE increasing disfavour with which opera has for some time been regarded by the more enlightened section of the musical community in this country has suddenly ripened into open hostility as a result of the recent attempt to create a Trust Fund for the subsidization of this form of art, and the ignominious failure of the scheme is probably to be attributed to this cause rather than to the indifference and apathy of the general public which, like the poor, we have always with us. Why, it has been pertinently asked, should opera be subsidized when our orchestral and choral organizations are equally in need of financial support, and at least equally deserving of it? The objection is legitimate and, indeed, unanswerable; but when the opponents of opera go on to say that, so far from being deserving of encouragement, it is a corrupt and degenerate form capable of appealing only to the lowest and most depraved musical appetites, and that it should consequently be permitted to expire without regret, it is surely time to raise a voice in protest or at least an eyebrow in astonishment.

It is certainly true that the current repertoire in this country contains many thoroughly bad works, and if those who adopt the uncompromising attitude to opera alluded to are only thinking of "Faust," "Louise," "Cavalleria Rusticana," and so forth, I am in cordial agreement with them. To expect that the public should hand out large sums of money in order to ensure second-rate performances of such things is a sheer impertinence which is not worth considering seriously. The indisputable fact remains, however, and cannot be got over, that there is probably a larger amount of good music written in operatic than in any other form. The history of music in the seventeenth century is almost entirely the history of opera; in the eighteenth and nineteenth it is very largely so. Even to-day it is likely that the works of Strauss which have the best chance of ultimate survival are his music-dramas, and that Delius's "Village Romeo" is that composer's finest work; many people would say the same of Debussy's "Pelléas."

The reasons for the attraction which this form of musical expression has had for so many composers in the past, and will continue to have in the future, it is fairly safe to say, are purely musical and have nothing to do with any literary or pictorial bias on their part. As Ferruccio Busoni—most abstract and anti-literary of composers—pointed out in his admirable "Vorwurf eines Vorwortes zur Partitur des Dr. Faust," opera is the one musical form in which every conceivable medium can find its place and opportunity—solo voices of every variety separately and in *ensemble*, orchestra, and chorus—every form, from the simplest march or dance to the most intricate contrapuntal structure; every mode of expression from dramatic recitative to purely lyrical utterance; every dimension of design from fresco to miniature. On account of this enormous scope and variety of treatment Busoni was of the opinion that in the future opera would come to be the highest and most universal form of musical expression. Observe, however, that this conception is at the opposite pole from the Wagnerian ideal. It is not music for the purposes of drama, but an autonomous musical form as much as the song, the dance, the cantata; in fact, it is all these in one, and something more besides. The fact that the musical interest is to some degree associated with literary or pictorial concepts need not disturb us greatly.

Most good music is, *i.e.*, practically all music written up to 1700 and half what has been written since, and it is only the most fanatical purists who will say that a Bach fugue is intrinsically better music than a chorus from the B minor Mass or one of the cantatas, or a movement from a Mozart string quartet superior to an aria from one of his operas.

In short, the entirely natural and healthy reaction against Wagner and his theories of music-drama which has manifested itself during the last fifty years will have done considerable harm, as well as good, if it succeeds in creating an enduring prejudice against one of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest, of all musical forms, consecrated by three centuries of creative activity on the part of most of the leading musical intelligences of their respective periods. It is, moreover, worthy of note that musical history conclusively shows that nearly all new departures in music, whether of form or of expression, from 1600 onwards, have been made in the field of dramatic composition, and that it is from this period that England loses her proud position of equality with other nations in the art of music. To what extent this decline is to be attributed to her almost complete neglect of what was to prove the most vital musical form of the succeeding centuries can only be conjectured. That there is, however, a definite connection between the two phenomena can hardly be doubted; that an awakening public interest and a certain measure of active support for opera in this country might still lead to important musical developments, as it has so often done in other countries, is more than probable.

Cecil Gray.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

IN "The Widow's Cruise," at the Ambassadors, Miss Joan Temple has created a nice situation, to which Miss Laura Cowie, Mr. Aubrey Smith, and Mr. Nicholas Hadden have all quite admirably risen. The scene is laid in a Capri villa, where Colonel Sir Theodore Frome is basking beside the softly feline war-widow whom he has recently married. Until one fine day there comes to visit them Captain "Ignoto," Italian hero and mystery-man, who at sight of Lady Frome recovers his long-lost memory, and recognizes in her his own forgotten wife. She is naturally disturbed by his resurrection; but in the unwonted mental effort of choosing between her two husbands, she discovers her own personality, is pleased by it, and decides that it can best be preserved in the "cotton-wool" with which her second husband surrounds her. The poetic and selfish Captain "Ignoto," therefore, goes off alone, leaving Sir Theodore and Lady Frome to enjoy the bliss of Capri as before. We are glad to know that Jill Lambert, Theodore's aggressively adolescent ward, is soon to be sent home to England. For if she stayed, she would mar their happiness, just as she mars the play—through no fault, be it said, of Miss Joan Maude, who acts a maddening part with long-suffering and discretion. We cannot, of course, expect a respite from the stage "modern girl" so long as she can still get her laughs; but for us, Jill's pert gush, and her conventionally outrageous antics, spoiled an otherwise delightful evening.

* * *

Perhaps I was disappointed by the "Miroir Juif," at the London Pavilion, because I had been looking forward to it so tremendously. Still, it is a matter for grievance that the performance was so very much more Russian (and Russian domiciled in Paris at that) than the real Jewish, which emerged only in one or two comic sketches and some moving religious chants. The Chauve Souris (which is certainly a very clever company) is really becoming an obsession and a curse. No foreign troupe now seems complete without its Balieff and Katinka (and the last versions are far from the most amusing variations on an overworn theme). The performance is just worth seeing, but all the time the spectator is maddened by hopes that remain unrealized. The Jews are at once the most romantic and the most humorous of all nations. Isaiah and Mr. Perlmutter

combined should produce something better than "Le Miroir Juif."

Mr. Stanley Groome's excellent production of Arthur Murphy's "The Way to Keep Him" (1761) at the East London College Theatre showed what a good entertainment these plays can be. They make small pretence to literary value; the psychological structure is flimsy, but it does not pretend to be anything else: it is sound as far as it goes. But these artificial comedies were aiming at something else. Working with conventional plots and unreal passions, they depend almost entirely upon the formal element: if not important in the history of literature, they are of great interest in the history of the drama, as being the nearest English approach to the *Commedia dell'Arte*. They have a natural rise and fall, and a quality of good nature which are very agreeable, but for a modern audience this play would have gained by being cut even more than it was. Miss Norma Varden as Mrs. Bellmour treated us to some exquisite phrasing it was a delight to hear; Miss Veronica Turley gave a beautifully restrained rendering of Mrs. Lovemore, a good set-off to the fuller-blooded Lady Constant of Miss Marie Ney. It was a strong cast, but amongst the men Mr. Bruce Belfrage as Sir Brilliant Fashion was the most entertaining, though Mr. Alfred Gray played Lovemore well. To my thinking, though all will not agree with me, Mr. Douglas Ross, though excellent in his way as Sir Bashful, was out of perspective by trying to turn his part into a humour; he destroyed the ease of the words, their only real quality, by a deliberately fluffy phrasing. The minor parts were all good, especially Miss Drusilla Wills as Muslin; but the whole production should have been quicker, for the ballet feeling was not always quite achieved. Perhaps this is a necessary defect of one-night performances.

In the new Dover Gallery (above the Independent Gallery in Grafton Street) is an exhibition of drawings by Derain, Dufresne, Frélaud, Friesz, Marchand Moreau, de Segonzac, Sickert, Signac, and Van Gogh. The one drawing by Derain is a portrait of a woman, of a fine classical simplicity; there are several good, characteristic Sickerts, among which his "Woman on a Sofa" is one of the loveliest; Signac's water-colours are very gay and attractive. Some of the most distinguished drawings here are those of Segonzac: his "Study of a Cow" is a solid, economical piece of drawing, and his landscapes and small studies, especially the "Woman Reading," are extremely sensitive. Van Gogh is represented by "The Mower," a respectable, but not particularly interesting work. At Messrs. Agnew's galleries is a large and very charming collection of eighteenth-century French engravings, exhibited on behalf of the French Hospital in London, and containing examples of the best work of the period. Apart from the considerable artistic merit which many of these elegant works possess—their technique is admirable, their drawing good, their colour often charming—they are also an amusing social record of that gay, light-hearted age.

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, March 13.—Exhibition of paintings of Claude Rameau at Messrs. Tooth & Sons.

Sunday, March 14.—Professor H. Kantorowicz on "The Prospects of the German Republic after Locarno," at 11, at South Place.

"Pericles," Fellowship of Players, at New Scala.

E. Strymgeour, M.P., on "The Abolition of the Drink Traffic," at 3.30, at Guildhouse, Eccleston Square.

Monday, March 15.—Mr. Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion," at Maddermarket, Norwich.

Lady Cathcart's "Ashes," at Prince of Wales's.

Marcelle Meyer, Piano Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Tuesday, March 16.—Mr. David Gray's "The Best People," at the Lyric.

John Goss, Lieder Recital, at 8.45, at Chenil Galleries.

Wednesday, March 17.—"The Blue Stockings," Special Matinée, at 2.45, at New Scala.

Kathleen Parlow and Evelyn Howard Jones, Sonata Recital, at 8.15, at Æolian Hall.

Thursday, March 18.—Sir William Beveridge on "Economic Problems of War," at 5.30, at London School of Economics.

Robert Silvester, Violin Recital, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, at 8, at Queen's Hall.

Friday, March 19.—Professor Basil Alexeiev on "The Chinese Theatre," at 5.15, at School of Oriental Studies.

The Pougnet Quartet Chamber Concert, at 8.15, at Wigmore Hall.

OMICRON.

SIX BIOGRAPHIES

GEORGE LILLO (1693-1739).

GEORGE LILLO, jeweller (of Dutch descent), Turned playwright with didactical intent, Urged the importance of the commonplace, And used plain prose to dialogue Disgrace. "Apprentice ruined by a courtesan," And "Rustic maid seduced by scoundrel farmer"; Such were the plots which made this worthy man The pioneer of modern melodrama.

ROGER PAYNE (1739-1797).

ON olive-brown morocco, a design Of elegant devices, gilt but plain; Star, crescent, circlet, acorn, running vine, Shone paramount, employed by Roger Payne.

Contrast with this, Payne's ragged outer-cover; His squalid face, forever at a tankard; Arrogant, improvident, cross-grained and cankered; And (if you trust externals) you'll discover That men whom you've disparaged for their looks May earn your approbation by their books.

SAMUEL ROGERS (1763-1855).

ROGERS, who pruned and pruned to well or worse The desiccated laurel of his verse, And breathed for ninety years (without a wife) The literary atmosphere of life, Respectably survives his bland meridian, A man of taste whose talents were quotidian.

GEORGE WOMBWELL (1778-1850).

No one was once more famous at a Fair Than Wombwell with his wizened wine-red skin. From the capricious purchase of a pair Of boa-constrictors his displays begin. In later years his stock-in-trade includes A score of lions and caravans twice twenty. Though rich with anecdote his life eludes Analysis. He died in peace and plenty.

FANNY UMPHELBY (1788-1852).

"Who was this Fanny Umphelby?" you ask. . . . She lived in Leatherhead and died at Bow; Made Education a congenial task, And taught mild infants all they ought to know. Pensive she sits,—the Urbane's genteel disseminant,—Nibbling her pencil in an arbour shady; Authoress of that compendium, once pre-eminent, Called "The Child's Guide to Knowledge; by a Lady."

THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY (1797-1839).

"We met—'twas in a Crowd"; "The Soldier's Tear"; "I'd be a Butterfly"; and, best of all, "She wore a Wreath of Roses"; songs we hear But seldom now; yet Bayly wrote them all. The 1820 charmer, with high-waist, Brown ringlets, ostrich-feathers, and gold locket, Warbled them languishingly. Modern taste Reacts from hers; and would, I fancy, shock it.

D. N. B.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

THE PROMISE OF SPRING

IT is said that there are to be more books published this spring than ever, because the strike caused many books to be held over from the autumn. Whether this be really the case or not, I do not know; it is difficult to gauge the threatened volume of book production from the lists of publishers' announcements, but, after reading them all through, I should not say that they contained more "forthcoming" books than usual. However, I shall not be surprised if the spring season of 1926 establishes another record in quantity. As to quality—everyone, of course, knows that in the year 1859 the following books were published: "Idylls of the King," "Adam Bede," "Tale of Two Cities," "Richard Feverel," Fitzgerald's "Omar Khaiyam," and "The Origin of Species." I wonder whether my now unborn successor will, after poring over the "Spring Lists" of 1926, be able to look back to those of 1926 and pick out three that have stood the grim test of time as well as those six of 1859. I wonder.

I must confess to having spotted none for which I would stake my reputation by prophesying an immortality of even sixty-seven years. There may be a book of poems in our list as good as Tennyson's "Idylls," but who is bold or clever enough to put his finger on it? Is it "The Bird of Paradise, and other Poems," by Mr. Davies (Cape, 3s. 6d.), or "Confessio Juvenis," by Mr. Richard Hughes (Chatto & Windus, 21s.), or Mr. Shanks's "Collected Poems" (Collins), or the "Works of J. C. Squire" (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.)? I leave my readers to answer for themselves.

Three of the "best books of 1859" were novels. In that year, besides Dickens, George Eliot, and Meredith, Thackeray, Peacock, and Trollope were all among the active writers of fiction (Trollope's "The Bertrams" is another book which was actually published in 1859). In 1926 we have a long, long list from which we may select for comparison. There is Mr. Wells with a new novel, "The World of William Clissold" (Benn). Of the novelists who are publishing this season I personally put Mr. Wells in a class almost by himself. Then there is Mr. Galsworthy with "The Silver Spoon," and Mr. Masfield with "Odtia" (both Heinemann). There are "Two or Three Graces," by Aldous Huxley (Chatto & Windus); "Crewe Train," by Rose Macaulay, and "The Wharf, and other Stories," by Walter de la Mare (both Collins); "The Plumed Serpent," by D. H. Lawrence (Secker); "From Man to Man," by Olive Schreiner (Fisher Unwin). One could add to this list other names of well-known writers whose novels will certainly be above the average, but I doubt whether we should be nearer spotting the winner in the immortality stakes of 1926. Perhaps (at any rate, I hope) she or he is really to be looked for among the unknown names of those who are publishing their first novels. I should add that as I did not include the Americans of 1859, so I omitted the Americans of 1926, but three American names at least deserve mention: Ring Lardner, whose two books "How to Write Short Stories" and "Gullible's Travels," which Messrs. Chatto & Windus are publishing, Sinclair Lewis's "The Job" (Cape), and Fannie Hurst's "Appassionata" (Cape).

One of "the best books of 1859," it will be observed, was scientific. I should not be at all surprised if the six best books of 1926 were all scientific. It is arguable that we are definitely passing away from an age of great works of art and literature into an age of purely scientific achievement. That is not necessarily anything to be pleased or proud about. The scientific

mind may produce a theory of relativity; on the other hand, it may produce a patent collar-stud or a gas which, in the next war to end war, will solve all our problems by conveniently exterminating the human race. At any rate, if you glance down our list of science books, you will see that things are moving in the world of science. "Science and the Modern World," by A. N. Whitehead (Cambridge University Press), may well be worth reading in 1993. "The Quantum Theory of the Atom," by G. Birtwistle, and "Atomicity and Quanta," by J. H. Jeans (both Cambridge University Press), deal with scientific theories and problems whose life will certainly be longer than that of the works included under most of our other headings. Then there are "The New Heat Theorem," by Professor W. Nernst (Methuen); "Sex in Man and Animals," by John R. Baker (Routledge); and "The Origin of Birds," by Gerhard Heilmann (Witherby).

Of other classes of books included in our Spring List the most notable is Biography. It is principally notable for its numbers. The enormous output of biographical works is a modern phenomenon; there was nothing answering to it in 1859. I should be greatly surprised if any of the volumes included in our list this week were widely read or remembered in 1993, yet it is among them that I should expect to find some of the most interesting and readable books of 1926. For instance, there is "Life of Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg," by C. E. Maurice (Allen & Unwin), which ought to be historically interesting; "Catherine the Great," by Katherine Anthony (Cape), I know to be. Cambridge men of many generations will look forward to "Henry Jackson, O.M.," by R. St. John Parry (Cambridge University Press), for no one who knew Jackson could doubt that he was a remarkable and typically English character. Another book which will appeal to Cambridge, and to Oxford, men—and indeed to all who love good letters—is "Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh" (Methuen). "The Letters of Queen Victoria, Second Series, 1862-1878" (Murray), is, of course, a notable book, and will still be read by historians, if any still exist, in the year 2000 A.D. Mrs. Sidney Webb's autobiography, "My Apprenticeship" (Longmans), which was reviewed last week in these columns by Professor Graham Wallas, is, undoubtedly, a remarkable book. Other volumes which I personally look forward to reading are "The Diary of a Country Parson, Vol. II." (Oxford University Press), the first volume of which gave so vivid a picture of the life of a country parson in the eighteenth century; "Mary Macarthur," by Mrs. Hamilton (Parsons); "The Life and Letters of Thomas Jefferson," by F. W. Hirst (Macmillan), with which should be bracketed "Jefferson and Hamilton," by C. G. Bowers (Constable); "The Intimate Papers of Colonel House" (Benn); "James Joyce," by Herbert S. Gorman (Bles); and "Leon Trotsky," by Max Eastman (Faber & Gwyer). I am glad to see, by the way, that Messrs. Dent are republishing that fascinating book "Seventy Years a Showman," by "Lord" George Sanger—at least, I suppose it is the same book which I read years ago in a paper cover, and has long been unobtainable, I think.

Here I must stop. I have cast an anxiously prophetic eye over the other classes of books in our list, for hidden away among them may be some volume destined for immortality. But, though there are many books there, some good and some valuable, I cannot see one which on its surface looks immortal.

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REVIEWS

CONSTANTINOPLE

The Byzantine Empire. By NORMAN H. BAYNES. Home University Library. (Williams & Norgate. 2s. 6d.)

Constantinople. By GEORGE YOUNG. (Methuen. 12s. 6d.)

MR. BAYNES's book is a welcome counterpart in English, by a leading English Byzantinist, to Professor Charles Diehl's "Byzance: Grandeur et Décadence" and "Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin." The writer gives a comprehensive and straightforward picture of a vanished world which, in recent years, has been rediscovered, or at least reinterpreted, by specialists, yet which remains almost as remote, in the eyes of the educated public of the present day, as Ancient Egypt or Babylon. Like most first-hand students of Byzantine history, Mr. Baynes combats the traditional view that it shows no elements of growth or originality, yet he insists more strongly upon the view that "for any vital understanding of the Byzantine Empire it is essential to realize that the civilization of that Empire was continuous with a past that was both Greek and Roman," and he contrasts this relative continuity with the break in our own history at the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. This view leads him to present his subject as "still life" rather than as action, and the book is so constructed as to give a cross-section of Byzantine life—a different aspect of which is taken up in each successive chapter.

This treatment has the advantage of being thorough without being confusing. On the other hand, it largely debars Mr. Baynes from discussing, except incidentally, the most interesting question which Byzantine history raises in the layman's mind, namely: "Why was it that a society which seemed so far to surpass our own Western world in achievement during the early Middle Ages came to such a miserable end?" This problem has been thrown into relief by Professor Diehl, in the former of the two works mentioned, by the adroit method of presenting two cross-sections instead of one. We could have wished that Mr. Baynes had given greater prominence to it. At the same time, he offers us, in passing, the two keys to the riddle. The reader should note his illuminating observations (pp. 26-28) upon the constant nervous strain under which the inhabitants of Byzantine Constantinople lived, and upon the supremacy of the Byzantine State (pp. 238-240) over all other interests and associations, including the Church. In the light of this, read the history of the conversion of Bulgaria and the subsequent war to the death between the Bulgarian and East Roman Czaroms, and the downfall of Byzantine civilization begins to explain itself.

For his lower chronological limit Mr. Baynes takes A.D. 1204—the capture of Constantinople by the Western Crusaders, which was undoubtedly a greater historical catastrophe than its capture by the Osmanlis in 1453. For his earlier limit he rejects the convulsions of the seventh century in favour of the foundation of Constantinople in the fourth. In a cross-section treatment, it might perhaps have been better to take the shorter chronological span. The chapter on education, for instance, suffers through dealing too much with pre-seventh-century conditions, and too little with the Middle Ages.

Mr. Baynes fixes upon the foundation of Constantinople as his starting-point because the Byzantine State and its capital were inseparable; but, after all, the Byzantine State was not the same thing as Byzantine civilization. Rather, it was an incubus or vampire which first drained the life-blood of Byzantine society and then found a second victim in Islamic society, which it has vampired in turn under the guise of the Ottoman Empire. Constantinople, in fact, is a capital which hitherto has successfully insisted upon somebody or other providing it with an empire to live on, regardless of expense. Between its foundation in A.D. 330 and the rise of the Turkish National State, with its capital at Angora, in 1919-1923, Constantinople has only three times been left stranded: once in the seventh century, from about A.D. 608 to 678; a second time in the thirteenth, from A.D. 1204 to 1261; and a third time in the fourteenth and fifteenth, from A.D. 1361 to A.D. 1453. In each of these cases the city has shown her resentment at finding herself without provinces to exploit by casting off the rulers who have maintained her so poorly and by taking to her bosom more efficient empire-builders in their place.

"Constantinople the Vampire" is the theme of Mr. Young's book, and this gives it greater unity of treatment than Mr. Baynes's. This was, indeed, necessary, for Mr. Young sets himself the literary *tour de force* of giving a running narrative of the history of Constantinople from A.D. 330 to A.D. 1926 in a reassuring, popular style, and at the same time inserting in his narrative, without overloading it, a gazetteer of all the sights of the city for the benefit of intelligent tourists. With almost perverse skill, Mr. Young carries this task through to a triumphant conclusion. In fact, he has produced a book which will be equally readable in an armchair in England or on a sight-seeing tour in Constantinople itself. There is also an unobtrusive slyness about this book, of which the following description of the training of the Ottoman tribute-children is a pleasant example:—

"In the Second Chamber they were carefully educated in languages, open-air games, &c. They were then safe for employment in the Second Division, as Treasury clerks or Palace curators. A still smaller number passed on thence to the Third Chamber, where they were further educated in the highest accomplishments, such as valeting, calligraphy, the care of pet dogs, &c. These last then became eligible for posts about the Sultan's person, and thereafter for provincial Governorships and Pashaliks. In its steps, and in the succession of qualifications it imparted, the ladder corresponded to our more modern training for Government posts, with its boarding-school, university, and private-secretaryship."

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

FOUR BOOKS ON ARCHITECTURE

Romanesque Architecture in Italy. By C. RICCI. (Heinemann. 42s.)

Some Lesser-Known Architecture of London. By J. BURFORD and J. D. M. HARVEY. (Benn. 15s.)

Dutch Architecture of the Twentieth Century. By J. P. MIERAS and F. R. YERBURY. (Benn. 32s. 6d.)

Roman Architecture and its Principles of Construction under the Empire. By G. T. RIVOIRA. Translated by G. McN. RUSHFORTH. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. £5 5s.)

THE majority of books on architecture nowadays are collections of beautiful photographs, introduced and sometimes explained by a slender essay. Three of the works now under review come within this category, while the fourth is a serious and weighty contribution to scholarship. Whether the picture-book, with its purely visual appeal and its lack of any demand on our reasoning faculties, is a healthy sign of the times is questionable. It does provide us with illustrations which represent things as they are with extraordinary fidelity; on the other hand, it discourages the black-and-white artist, whose work has a charm that no camera can replace. One effect of this form of photographic book-production is that the scanty letterpress is relegated to the beginning or end of the volume, so that the "reader" need not read it, and may confine his wandering attention to the plates. But if this is to be so, one might surely expect such exiguous prefaces to be models of concise English and accurate statement. Unfortunately the reverse often prevails.

Thus Professor Ricci's brief introduction to "Romanesque Architecture in Italy" is very heavy going for the reader and has been badly translated. Several sentences are quite unintelligible (e.g., the first column and footnote on p. xi.). Apart from the translator's mishandling of technical terms, one finds such slips as "were" for "where," "Rom" for "Rome," "Benevent" for "Beneventum," "S. Donati" for "S. Donato," &c. In one passage we read of the Lombards, a few lines later of the "Langobard Period." Except for these inexcusable slips, and for the fact that the excellent plans in the introduction are not sufficiently related to the text, no fault is to be found with Professor Ricci's estimate (so far as one can understand it) of Romanesque architecture. He points out that the term was invented rather more than a century ago to denote the art of Western Europe after the death of Charlemagne in 814, and on the whole he approves of it. He excludes the Byzantine architecture of Venice and the "Arabo-Byzantine" buildings of Sicily as not being pure Romanesque. He rightly insists on the remarkable continuity of Roman architecture in Italy, throughout the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. He also notes the

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frequent appearance of Etruscan influence in Romanesque work, but holds that foreign influences were transmitted mainly by small decorative works of art such as jewellery, fabrics, and ivories. He deals very cautiously with the Comacine masters, and is inclined to ridicule the effect on architectural development of the expected end of the world in A.D. 1000. He remarks that renewed activity in building after that date may be attributed to other causes. Of his illustrations one cannot speak too highly.

Commendatore Rivoira's book was first published in 1919 in Italian, and has now been admirably translated by Mr. Rushforth, who also translated his great works on Lombard and Moslem architecture. It opens with an appreciative memoir of the author. Rivoira, who died in 1919, has contributed as much to architectural scholarship as any living writer. Trained as an engineer, his bias was towards the practical rather than the æsthetic side of architecture, and the present book is primarily a study of Roman building methods, written with all his usual immense learning, his confidence in what he knows by personal investigation, his almost aggressive determination to attribute everything in architecture to a Roman origin, and his complete disregard of literary graces. It is hard reading, but puts before us the latest results of research as well as his own decided views, and is produced with the scrupulous accuracy and in the lavish style that one associates with the Clarendon Press. It is generously illustrated.

Messrs. Burford and Harvey have justified the rather daring claim made in the title of their attractive little book, for their subjects, if not entirely unknown, are at least unhackneyed. One of the pair is a very skilful photographer with a happy knack of seizing the ideal point of view for each of his pictures. Indeed, a few of the buildings illustrated have picturesque charm rather than any special architectural merit, and the same may be said of many of Mr. Harvey's clever sketches. The preface is very slight, but contains an amusing remark about Hampstead, that "Its old buildings are too consciously antique. It presumes on its Old Age." For this we forgive the writer his too generous use of capital letters, and a few slips in proper names.

These three books all show the mighty tradition of Imperial Rome, persisting even in the sedate Georgian houses of London Town. But when we turn to "Dutch Architecture of the Twentieth Century," with its orange cover breathing revolt at us, it is difficult to see where tradition comes in. The origin and nature of this architecture is explained in an introduction of some pages, but at the end one is not quite clear what it all means. This may be the fault of the translator; at any rate the English is obscure. We are told that a movement for "rational" building, in which architectural forms should express construction, was brought about by Dr. Cuyper between 1850 and 1890. In 1880 occurred an "intellectual revival" in Holland, which began to affect architects about 1890, at first in the way of theorizing and designing, and later in actual building. The first and chief example of this tendency is Berlage's New Bourse at Amsterdam, begun in 1898. He is said to have followed "the rigorous laws of number and dimension," whatever they may be; to have given the building a "cosmopolitan character, without its national nature being thereby renounced," and so on: not a very illuminating explanation. Berlage has carried out few other buildings, but was followed by a group of younger men whose outlook is "largely intellectual, sectarian-formalistic," and "breathes a certain tenderness which excites the antipathy of many." This "tenderness" is hard to find in buildings which are for the most part starkly rectangular, diversified here and there by eccentric features. Certainly these Dutch architects sometimes treat ferro-concrete admirably, as in the fine Radio Station at Kootwyk, and there are other designs here which contrive to be original without being freakish. But in their desire to avoid deception at all costs, some architects have faced concrete structures with bricks laid vertically instead of horizontally, to show that the brick facing is not structural. This new Dutch architecture is very much alive, it indicates a real wish to be modern, but it leaves one with the impression that it is still in the experimental stage and has not yet reached finality. Mr. Yerbury's beautiful photographs demonstrate the high level reached in architectural illustration to-day.

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The marriage was unfortunate in that two people who so evidently wanted to be together were forced to be so much apart; and inevitably his wife underwent the agonized questioning as to how much she meant to him. Again and again he protests his love, his admiration for her as an artist, his need to have her by his side, but there was something reserved in him she could not reach. Again, we ask, was it his foreknowledge of death? She complained sometimes of his insufficiency as a correspondent: the wonder is he could ever write at all. He was battling against mortal illness, against the shoals of tiresome and often unknown visitors, who would sit with him for hours; seeing some real friends such as Gorky and Tolstoy; and all the while trying to write stories, and achieving that masterpiece "The Cherry Orchard," achieved too, in doubt of its value, in horrible doubt as to what actors and producers would turn it into.

It was a good idea of Mr. Friedland to collect together the letters on literature, and it would be unfair to grumble at certain omissions, or premature truncations of passages. The casual reader will already be familiar with many of the extracts, but in this form they will be invaluable to the real student of literature. There is more to be learnt about short-story writing or play-writing in this volume than in a dozen text-books, which nearly always deal with the things that do not matter, or which any person with common sense can find out for himself. The rest is a question of self-moulding, or, as Chekhov would have said, observing life honestly. This he was always doing: "I have now completed my observations in the Pension Russe (Nice), and now I want to move into another hotel."

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There is one passage, to be found in both books, which, were I a manager, I would hang framed in every dressing-room:—

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generally called the psychology of religious mysticism, and this understanding absolves him from affectation or sentimentality. The book has serenity without that faint fatuity which in however small a dose generally accompanies it. The canon himself is an impressive figure, and in contemporary fiction a unique one.

Miss Linford, too, deals with a clerical household, and her clergyman, too, is a religious type. But one has the feeling that while the late A. C. Benson wrote about things, Miss Linford writes about phrases. It is as if she had heard that clergymen were religious, and that religion was a yearning of the soul towards God, and accepting these facts without inquiring too deeply into them, had sat contentedly down to portray a religious clergyman. With her other characters she does somewhat the same. Margaret, the rector's wife and the chief figure in the book, is simply the good wife of popular fiction, described with more literary skill than others of the same kind, but as far from reality. It is a curious thing that with a noticeable if rather crude feeling for words Miss Linford should write as if her view of life were that of "The Girl's Own Paper." In a realistic novel such innocence is maddening.

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Ninon de Lenclos. By EMILE MAGNE. Translated by GERTRUDE SCOTT STEVENSON. (Arrowsmith. 10s. 6d.)

SHE is still called Ninon, and herein lies her charm to posterity. Other women have had almost as many and almost as distinguished lovers as Ninon; but they called themselves Princesse, Marquise, Duchesse. But Ninon is still just Ninon, simple and unaffected as when, in the sublime words of her latest biographer, "Another day she was more daring, and disrobing herself, stepped into the water of the fountain like some beautiful naiad"—a fine French paraphrase for bathing. She appeals to us as one who regularly refused to be bluffed by the humbug of the Grand Siècle, and remained constant throughout life to her scepticism. Mrs. Scott Stevenson, indeed, observes in the introduction that in her later days she looked forward to meeting her friends after death. But reference to the actual passage, which occurs in a letter to Saint-Evremond, shows that she said exactly the opposite.

M. Magne's book, in fact, need never have been either written or translated. He adds little, and nothing of importance, to our existing knowledge of Ninon, and perorates in a mingled strain of pietism and sensuality that many people will find distasteful. Sainte-Beuve's essay, "Ninon de Lenclos et Saint-Evremond" still remains the best thing on the subject, and readers will gladly turn there when more pretentious books are forgotten. Certainly the octogenarian correspondence of these two wits is one of the most curious and delightful bypaths in literature. She was also the friend and adviser of Molière, and intimate with many other intelligent people. She was very unworldly, and never robbed her lovers. As for the people who paid for her modest upkeep, they got but a small share of her favours, and were always given to understand that they were on the north side of their lady's opinion. She was the coiner of many elegant epigrams, such as that to Christina of Sweden: "Les précieuses, ce sont les Jansenistes de l'amour." Many of them were made under indiscreet circumstance. "Vous devriez être bien fort, M. de Condé. . . ." Of the young Marquis de Sévigné, harassed between Ninon and the Champmêslé: "C'est une vraie Citrouille fricassée dans la neige. . . ." Or, again (on breaking her written promise), "Oh, le bon billet qu'a la Châtre." The pretty turns of wit float down the ages, and are all to be found in Sainte-Beuve as well as in more pompous biographies. She was really in love with only one man, Villarceaux, and he was in all probability filched from her by Mme. de Maintenon in her old unregenerate days as Mme. Scarron. Even then it was Ninon who lent them her "yellow room" for their infidelities. She seduced both the husband and the son of Mme. de Sévigné, but never became her enemy. When bored with a lover, she threw him over at once, but always kept him as a friend. She was a deeply read woman, soused in Montaigne and Charron, and a real writer of French prose. Here again Sainte-Beuve has the final word:—

"De Montaigne et de Charron, à Saint-Evremond et à Ninon, et de Ninon à Voltaire, il n'y a que la main, comme on voit. C'est ainsi que dans la série des temps quelques esprits font la chaîne." Right at the end of her life, in fact, she was introduced to Voltaire, then a precocious poet of thirteen, by his godfather, the Abbé de Chateaufort. M. Magne observes, in language worthy of Mr. Trumbull, "She could have no possible idea of the sort of Anti-Christ he was to become under the pseudonym of Voltaire, and how he was to be hated by the entire Catholic Church." Perhaps not, but as Sainte-Beuve more quietly and sensibly observes:—

"Elle sembla présenter ce que serait bientôt cet enfant et elle lui légua par son testament 2,000 francs pour acheter des livres."

M. Magne, in fact, is justified, like all bad French biographers, by the fact that he inevitably sends the reader back to Sainte-Beuve, who has always said the whole thing long before, far better, and in less space. The most amusing thing in the book is a portrait of Mme. de Maintenon "disrobed" (to quote Mrs. Stevenson's favourite word), with which many people will be unacquainted.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

ENGLISH CATHOLICS

The Life and Times of Bishop Ullathorne. By DOM CUTHBERT BUTLER. 2 vols. (Burnes & Oates. 25s.)

DOM BUTLER's history of nineteenth-century Catholicism in England—it is what this book amounts to—shows so much understanding of the outside critic's point of view that it may have a considerable effect on anti-Catholic minds. Far from denying that intrigue and injustice go on in the course of Catholic administration, he maintains sensibly that "those who figure in these pages—Wiseman, Errington, Manning, Newman, Ullathorne, Clifford, Vaughan, and the rest—are good enough men and big enough men to be able to bear their fair share of human frailty," and that "for better, for worse, Church History is in great measure made up of the differences and quarrels of good men." It is disarming, and prepares one to read with something like sympathy this account of the organization and development of Catholicism in England since the Emancipation. Dom Butler is able to write history so vividly that one finds oneself taking sides in all the disputes he has to recount. Thus, although one knows that religious organizations often have about as much to do with religion as academies and salons have to do with art, and that it may matter as little to religion who is Archbishop of Westminster or Canterbury as it matters to art who is President of the Royal Academy or the New English Art Club, one can hardly read Dom Butler's chapter on the Westminster succession without excitement, and a sigh of relief when at last the Pope decides on Manning rather than Ullathorne or Talbot.

One's sense of comedy is roused a little by the position in which Bishop Ullathorne found himself amongst all the intriguers. He had been at sea for a couple of years in his youth, so he knew something of unclerical human nature. And he belonged to an old Catholic family and realized, as all well brought up Catholics do, that for practical purposes all the problems of existence were settled when the Italian author of the "Summa Theologica" imposed order on the magnificent intellectual anarchy of twelfth and thirteenth-century Europe, and that there is no necessity to make a fuss. This, however, would not do for the converted amateurs. Storms raged between the Newmans, Mannings, Wards, and Wisemans. And often Ullathorne had to act as peacemaker. He rebuked Ward publicly—Ward was a layman—but without actually naming him. He rebuked Newman privately, accusing him, frankly but kindly, of intellectual pride, and he got Newman round to his side. He held his own as well as he could against Manning. For a bishop he was a "jolly old fellow." He could let his friends down a little when they got themselves into trouble with authority; but that is the usual way with people in office, and as much as he could do for them without making himself disagreeable to authority, he always did. He had the simple genius that is appreciated by the ordinary man. He had no profundity of thought, though he read the Fathers. He adored pamphleteering, but it was always on some practical matter. As a young, and very young-looking, priest, he was made Vicar-General of Australia. And on his return home after three years he did as much to rouse England to a sense of the monstrous conditions in which it forced convicts—many of whom were Fenians transported without definite charge being made against them—to live in Australia, as Chekhov did in the case of Russia and the Siberian prisoners, sixty years later.

But it is in questions affecting Catholicism in England, more especially those that divided the bishops, of whom Ullathorne was the usual spokesman, and the Archbishops of Westminster, first Wiseman and then Manning, and in the differences between Manning and Newman, that the main interest of the book lies. Here Dom Butler is more interesting than any recent writer on the subject, as cheerful as Mr. Strachey, more dignified than Mr. Shane Leslie, more gracious than Mr. Arnold Lunn. And also, perhaps surprisingly, more detached than any of them. He thinks Wiseman was the greatest figure amongst his heroes. Yet he does not evade any of the unpleasant aspects of Wiseman's character, and paints an almost sympathetic portrait of Archbishop Errington, who managed to bring out the most unchristian side of both Wiseman and Manning. He has a partiality that is not as strong or as sentimental as Mr. Strachey's for that mournful genius New-

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This book is written in a style which fills the mind with an insatiable admiration for the genius of the immortal exponent of human passion and character, and greatest of all masters of the art of expression, known to the world as Shakespeare. In him the author sees, not only the Prince of Poets, but a Prince of the royal blood, the son of a Queen-mother, the gifted but flinty-hearted Queen Elizabeth, as stated in the cipher story.

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man, and though Manning remains, on the whole, the villain of the piece, Dom Butler recognizes his merits. In fact, he makes it all a part of the human comedy, working itself out for divine ends of course, but with its humorous side nevertheless. There is no really tragic figure—there being no figure of purely religious significance. There are only controversialists, and men of affairs and seekers for power. Ullathorne was a little of all these, but what gives him charm as a prelate, is that charity, if it did not come before party spirit with him, was at least a very good second.

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS

The Cathedral Churches of England. By A. HAMILTON THOMPSON. (S.P.C.K. 8s. 6d.)

THE Professor of Mediæval History at Leeds has produced a book far more important than appears from its size and modest price. Volumes on the English Cathedrals continue to be published in a steady stream, but they nearly all follow stereotyped lines and are still written from the sentimental standpoint of the Gothic Revival. Professor Hamilton Thompson, on the other hand, is concerned to show us the function which the mediæval cathedral had to serve, its place in national and local life, the names and duties of its officials, the nature of its ritual, and the methods by which it was built. He writes calmly, clearly, and impartially, avoiding both the cheap sentiment and cheaper cynicism so often found in modern books on mediæval Church life. The admirable bibliography will be of real value to students, and the thirty-one illustrations form an interesting and unhackneyed series.

After demolishing some popular superstitions about cathedrals in general, he explains exactly what a cathedral is, how it differs from a monastic or parish church, and how the constitution of its governing body has changed with the centuries. Incidentally, we are informed how deans, vicars, canons, and parsons got their names; why antiphonal music is marked *decani* and *cantoris*; and why so majestic a being as a prebendary was once associated with provender.

The long chapters on "Architectural Development" and "Internal Arrangement" are not devoted, as in most manuals on cathedrals, to the labelling of periods and styles. The author rightly insists that mediæval building was "an affair of construction" rather than of carved ornament. His description of vaulting methods is very lucid, but seems to need some diagrams to make it fully intelligible to the general reader. The growth of a cathedral, though partly due to a desire to produce a noble building, was occasioned by other important factors, such as the need for providing additional chapels for altars and shrines for saints, the increased space required for processional purposes, the frequent addition of a Lady chapel in the thirteenth century, the replacing of towers and other portions that collapsed, improved notions of lighting, and the provision of fireproof roofs. The mediæval cathedral had no long vistas: the interior was broken up by numerous screens and was a blaze of bright colours and gilding. A large congregation was never expected or provided for. The unwavering belief of our forefathers in the efficacy of prayers for the dead stands out prominently in these pages:—

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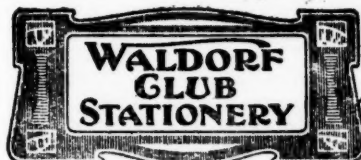
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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

THE DECLINE IN SECURITY VALUES—MONEY—RUBBER—A SHIPPING PROSPECTUS.

AT the end of February the index of all Stock Exchange securities (figures of the *INVESTOR'S CHRONICLE*) had gone back to the level ruling somewhere in October, namely, 117.6, as compared with 119.6 on January 29th and 121.7 on December 31st (100=December 31st, 1923). The biggest drop during February occurred in rubber shares—27.5 points to 192.7. The next was a decline of nearly 9 points in textiles other than silk. This was due chiefly to the slump in Bradford Dyers, whose index is now 129.6, as compared with 164.1 at December. The index for all "business" securities fell 2.1 points, and that for "speculative" 2.5 points. In fact, during February all securities declined with the exception of hotels and catering shares, land, tea, and tin mining shares. The following indices showing the rise and fall in the rubber group are of interest:—

Sept. 29.	Oct. 30.	Nov. 30.	Dec. 31.	Jan. 29.	Feb. 26.
195.0	205.1	235.4	248.3	220.2	192.7

The decline in security values may go further. Markets are faced with the Coal Commission's report, which cannot be anything but depressing, a labour crisis in the engineering industry, not to mention a falling franc and a coming batch of new issues. But who would not prefer the London Stock Exchange to New York where selling can develop any day into a panic? The slump in New York is regarded as no more than a severe correction of the over-bullishness that was prevalent in the security markets. For the moment there is said to be no more than a seasonal easing in American trade and no indication that business conditions there are not healthy.

A fortnight ago money was cheap and the market discount rate for three months' bills had fallen to nearly 4 per cent. To-day money is almost dear and the market rate is 4 5-16 to 4 3-8 per cent. This shows how foolish it is to talk of a reduction in Bank rate the moment that the monetary situation brightens. A fortnight ago the situation was abnormal, seeing that the flight from the franc and the trade slump in Germany had been responsible for a heavy Continental demand for bills which were in short supply. The Bank can always make money dearer by selling bills, and this it did last week, while the foreign demand for bills eased. There is, therefore, no longer any excuse for market rumours of a reduction in Bank rate. Since December 3rd, when Bank rate was raised from 4 per cent. to 5 per cent., there has been a further net efflux of gold of £1,170,000, bringing the total net efflux since April, 1925, to £11,481,000. A contraction in the gold basis of credit by £1,170,000 since December 3rd is no signal for the lowering of Bank rate. Finally, the exchanges are none too firm. The gilt-edged market in consequence is inclined to droop.

Little by little the public is learning the economic facts of the rubber situation from the speeches of Chairmen at rubber company meetings. The latest contribution was that of the Chairman of United Serdang (Sumatra). These were his points: (1) Stocks are very small. Before the war the London stock averaged 3 to 3 1/2 per cent. of the world's annual absorption. During the rubber slump it averaged a little under 20 per cent.; at the end of 1924 it was 6.3 per cent., and last December only 1 per cent. To-day it is about 1 1/2 per cent., and of this stock not more than 40 per cent. is standard quality rubber. (2) Until stocks amount to a larger percentage of the turnover there will be wide fluctuations in prices. (3) 100 per cent. production may be achieved in the first quarter by the aid of the surplus accumulated, but later production will be less than "standard." Dutch native output in 1925 showed a 50 per cent. increase, and if this resulted from the more drastic tapping the 1926

output cannot show anything like the same increase. (4) Consumption will show a large increase over the enormous consumption of 1925. On the point of using reclaimed rubber, the President of the General Tyre and Rubber Company said, "Such a method of attempted conservation is not only short-sighted but extravagantly wasteful. The only safe and sane way to conserve rubber is to make the tyre wear longer." These facts, together with the good dividends now being declared, are beginning to instil confidence in the market.

* * *

It may be recalled that Messrs. Harland & Wolff, of which firm Lord Kylsant is Chairman, made an issue in 1924 of £4,000,000 6 per cent. preference shares on the barest information of the financial position of the company. These preference shares now stand at 14s. 6d. This week Coast Lines, Ltd., of which Lord Kylsant is also Chairman, appealed for public subscription to an issue of £2,000,000 5 per cent. Debenture stock at 90, and issued a prospectus which was even more conspicuous than that of Messrs. Harland & Wolff for its singular lack of financial intelligence. This prospectus gave no details of the tonnage of the fleet, or of the value of the assets on which the debenture stock is secured, or of the profits earned beyond a bare statement that for each of the past five years there was sufficient to pay the interest on the present issue more than twice over. The prospectus mentioned that the debenture stock is repayable at 102, but is silent on the point of sinking fund. Why is it that the appeals of some shipowners for the public savings show a contempt for public intelligence?



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